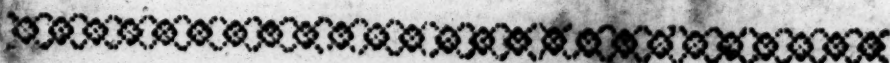


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A SHORT
D E F E N C E
OF THE
O P P O S I T I O N.



[PRICE EIGHTEEN PENCE.]



A SHORT
DEFENCE
OF THE
OPPOSITION;
IN ANSWER TO
A PAMPHLET
INTITLED,
"A SHORT HISTORY
"OF THE
"OPPOSITION."

Audi alteram partem.

" It is Time for every Man, who is desirous to preserve the
" British Constitution secure, to contribute all he can to
" prevent the Effects of that new Influence and Power
" which hath gained Strength in every Reign since the
" Revolution ***** Many Securities to Liberty are pro-
" vided; but the Integrity which depends on the Free-
" dom and Independency of Parliament, is the Key-stone
" that keeps the whole together."

BOLINGBROKE *on Parties.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ALMON, *Piccadilly*; J. DODSLEY, *Pall-Mall*;
and B. WHITE, *Fleet-street*.

MDCCLXXIX.

REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS

IN ANSWER TO
A RESOLUTION
PASSED BY THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS



It is a time for every man to consider his
British Constitution, to consider how he can so
prevent the State of that new balance and power
which has grown up in every reign since the
Revolution. Many countries are already
ruined; but the integrity which remains on the part
of our and independence of Parliament is the only
thing that keeps the world together."

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A SHORT DEFENCE, &c.

THE Author of the Short History of the Opposition, though he professes to give the History of Opposition during the *last* Session of Parliament only, does in fact impeach their conduct, not only during the last Session, but for several preceding Sessions; and this without the least investigation, much less proof. It would have been more in the character of a faithful Historian, if he had not confined himself to the point of a few months, and deviated from that period, only to beg questions that have never been granted, and to assert facts, as the foundation of his History, that have been often disproved. But there are some positions that ought to be denied, not on account of their palpable falsehood, but on account of their latent maliciousness and evil tendency. Now the Author above mentioned, as well as the Ministers in both Houses of Parliament, confess the dangerous conjuncture of affairs, and the necessity of all parties laying aside their animosities against each other, and uniting in the common defence; but, instead of observing his own precept, he sets out with the most illiberal

B

attack

attack of those who opposed in Parliament the coercive measures of Administration towards *America*, 'till those measures were changed the Session before the last, not indeed from choice, but necessity; and who, without thwarting such measures of Government as were rendered necessary by misconduct, have continued to oppose the Ministry since, on account of the dire effect of their former errors, and a subsequent and fatal experience of their want of the abilities requisite in their stations. Would to God such opposition had not been in vain!—In vain then would have been all the efforts of our enemies; our Possessions would have been intire; our Treasures would not have been wasted; the Empire of the Sea could not have been disputed with us! Not that there is just reason to be under any alarm from an Invasion of this Island, whilst our Navy is half that of the House of *Bourbon*, and whilst there is harmony and unanimity in the execution of such measures as the King and Parliament shall think advisable, Harmony in deliberation is not to be expected, the very essence of which is freedom of thought and speech; but if Men, after having delivered their sentiments freely, unite in carrying those measures into effect, which are the result of such deliberation, this may be justly called harmony and union; because it is as much as the case will admit of, and to expect more would be to destroy the valuable privilege of freedom of debate. This freedom of debate, however, is, like Liberty herself, restrained and kept within due bounds; and to debate in either House of Parliament, whether we should resist the House of *Bourbon* to the uttermost, would be as great an abuse of this privilege, as to argue that we are free, and therefore

therefore have a right to enslave others as well as ourselves.

I thought it necessary to premise this, because much has been said of late concerning the crime of opposing the measures of Ministry; as if all who came under that description, must of course be enemies of their Country, and attached to its foes: But it must be remembered, that the measures of the Ministry are not acts of the Legislature 'till after they have been submitted to, and debated in both Houses of Parliament; that, 'till then, they are only *sub judice*, and fit for a free discussion: And indeed, if this is not allowed, there is an end to the freedom of Parliament, and of our boasted Constitution, which has been the admiration of *Europe*, and the envy of our neighbours. But, whilst there is a spark of Liberty in this Country, there will always be an Opposition in Parliament to such measures of Ministers as seem liable to animadversion, and pregnant with mischief; for, although Ministers have great power, and a still more dangerous influence, there have been, and I hope always will be, among the Representatives of the Nation, many Country Gentlemen of great abilities, as well as public spirit; many others, of great virtue and unspotted integrity, who, perhaps without shining abilities, are yet equally watchful for the good of their Country; and there will, from the nature of the thing, be some too, (a small number in comparison of the rest) who, with great ambition as well as abilities, may endeavour to promote their own aggrandisement, if they can do it consistently with the real interest and prosperity of their Country. It is to none of these descriptions of men, that the term Opposition is a dishonourable one; and

and it is the fault of Ministers, if the last become formidable rivals of their rank and power in the State: for, of two measures, the Minister has always the choice; and, if he takes that which is for the public good, the opposition of this measure is futile for the present, and the happy result of the measure opposed, covers, in the end, those who oppose it, with disgrace and confusion: but if, on the other hand, whether from corruption, or want of wisdom, Ministers propose and carry through measures that are prejudicial to the Nation, they will be opposed with vigour, if not with success; and the result of their injudicious or criminal conduct, will in the end prove a disgrace to themselves, and an honour to their opponents.

Having thus made a few remarks on the nature of Opposition in general, I agree with the Author, that, if there ever was a time when an united exertion among ourselves against the common enemy was requisite, and a suspension at least of all party animosity, it is certainly the present, though he has done every thing in his power to keep this animosity alive, and to prevent that union which he pretends to recommend; and indeed, if his assertions are founded in truth, then the union and acting in concert with such men is much more perilous than all the efforts of our natural and public foes. His assertions are,
 “ That the most formidable foes of *Great-Britain*
 “ are nursed within her own bosom: these, under
 “ the mask of Patriotism, fomented rebellion in
 “ her Colonies, and, by exposing her pretended
 “ weakness, erected a combination of powerful
 “ States, not only against her interest, but her
 “ very existence as a great and powerful Kingdom.”

“ dom.”(a) Again, “ With a want of prudence
 “ as well as decency, they tie up the hands of
 “ their Country in the hour of danger; they not
 “ only justify rebellion against her authority, but
 “ indirectly promote a foreign war against her
 “ very existence.”(b) The Author prudently
 confesses, that “ to establish these positions, and
 “ many more of the same kind, since the com-
 “ mencement of the present Parliament, would
 “ be a work of great labour, and little entertain-
 “ ment; and he shall therefore confine himself
 “ to the most striking features of the last Session,
 “ in which,” says he, “ they have crowded to-
 “ gether the absurdities of seven years.”(c)

The assertion, that the rebellion in *America* was fomented by the Opposition, has been a favourite one with the Ministry, ever since they found that their own violent measures so little answered the purposes they expected. Unless this could be established, and be credited by their numerous Friends and Adherents, (among which are many who do not think at all, and from a good motive perhaps make it a rule uniformly to fix their faith on the Ruling Powers, whoever they are) every other hope of throwing the blame off their own shoulders, would be vain and fruitless. Now, not to repeat the ample and unanswerable refutation of this assertion in both Houses of Parliament, I shall take this question up a little higher than the above Author has chose to do, and shew the utter falsity of it in point of fact, and the absolute impossibility of such con-

(a) Hist. of Opposition, Advertisement.

(b) Ibid. p. 4.

(c) Ibid. p. 5.

consequences having proceeded from so slight a cause, even if it had existed.

It is well known, that the Stamp-Act was passed in February and March, 1765, without the least opposition in Parliament. The right of *Great-Britain* to tax *America* was not denied; the right claimed by *America*, in the closet of the Minister, of being exempt from Taxation, was not asserted in the *British* Parliament. It is fortunate for the sake of the truth I am now maintaining—it is unfortunate perhaps for this Nation,—that the subject was not discussed, or questions stated concerning the consequences of this Act in *America*. Many reasons contributed to this: the Session was a remarkably short one; the Nation was in a most prosperous state; the greatest confidence was placed in the undoubted integrity and acknowledged abilities of the Minister, then at the head of the finances. Mr. *Pitt*, afterwards Lord *Chatham*, was at that time confined to his bed with the gout, though he declared, in the subsequent Session, “that, if he could have endured to have
“ been carried in his bed, so great was his agitation
“ of mind for the consequences, he would have
“ solicited some kind hand to have laid him down
“ on that floor to have borne his testimony against
“ it:”(a)—And, in order to induce an immediate, absolute, and total repeal of it, declared, “That
“ if Ministry did not repeal it, success would
“ be hazardous in such a cause: *America*, if she
“ fell, would fall like the strong Man; she
“ would embrace the pillars of the State, and pull
“ it down along with her.”(b)—But this was after the determined spirit of that Country had
been

(a) Parl. Deb. vol. 7. p. 63.

(b) Parl. Deb. vol. 7. p. 76.

been experienced on the subject of Taxation ; for it is well known what effect the Stamp-Act had in *America*. The whole Country was in a flame—Places the most remote from each other, without the least concert together at first, acted as if inspired with one soul—The greatest outrages were committed in various parts of the Continent of *America* ; but they were not of so alarming a nature as the more dangerous, because the more cool and temperate resolutions of the different Provincial Governments, which were unanimous in denying the right of the Mother Country, and in agreeing not to import any *British* commodities 'till this Tax was taken off. When the Parliament met therefore in the winter, a Committee was appointed to examine into these tumults and disturbances ; and the result of this enquiry was a resolution to repeal the Stamp Act, not on any doubt of its legality, but as a matter of wisdom and policy. I shall not now enter into the question of right, or into the arguments that were used on either side, because this would take me off from the only purpose I have in going over again this beaten ground, namely, to shew that the resistance of *America* to the exercise of the right of Taxation was voluntary and spontaneous on her part, and not excited by any violence of party in either branch of the Legislature : but then it is said (for I am willing to give the argument all its weight) “ that, though there might
 “ be a general dislike in *America* to the being
 “ taxed by this Country, this would never
 “ have broke out in the outrageous manner it did,
 “ in the years 1773 and 1774, if it had not been
 “ fomented by the speeches in both Houses
 “ of Parliament, and kept alive by great ex-
 “ pectations

“peccations from their Friends in this Country.” Now, it having been already proved, that the resistance of *America* was spontaneous in the first instance, there is no occasion to prove, that at least the same spirit of resistance prevailed in the year 1767, when other Acts were passed for granting certain duties in the *British Colonies in America*. The combinations in that Country were so alarming from this period, that in the year 1770, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has continued in that post ever since, thought proper to repeal all these Taxes, except that on Tea, the immediate cause of the subsequent troubles; and this was avowedly left, to preserve the honour of Parliament, that it might not be supposed they had repealed the rest from fear or pusillanimity. Even this paltry remnant of these Revenue Laws would, on account of the firm resolution of the Colonists to import no Tea whatever, have had no operation, if, impolitically and most unfortunately, a plan had not been adopted, in the year 1773, to assist the *East-India* Company, in forcing great quantities of this commodity on the people of *America*, subject to the above duty, to be collected in that country. This was the measure that led to such a train of unhappy consequences; but, far from its being opposed in Parliament, it does not appear there was any debate upon it: certainly therefore, whatever resistance was made to the operations of this Act, they were not excited by any Faction in this Country. The affairs of the *East-India* Company ingrossed at that time the whole attention of the Nation: *America* was more quiet than she had been for some time; and it might be fairly concluded, that the Ministry knew what they were about, and would take care to act
in

in such a manner as not to revive disputes, which, from the almost total repeal above mentioned, and from other assurances given the Colonies by the Secretary of State for the *American* Department, there were great hopes would entirely die away, and be forgotten.

But how was this measure, of empowering the *East-India* Company to send their Teas to *America*, and collect the Duties there, received in that Country? It was opposed in the most violent manner by almost every Colony upon the Continent, particularly at *Charles-Town*, *New York*, *Philadelphia*, and *Boston*. At *New York* a hand-bill was dispersed in November, in which it was declared, "That the fetters which had been forged
" by *Great-Britain*, were soon expected to arrive
" in Ships belonging to the *East-India* Company."
At *Philadelphia* there was a Meeting, the 18th of October, of all the Inhabitants at the State-House; in which it was resolved, among other things,
" That the resolution lately entered into by the
" *East-India* Company, to send out their Teas to
" *America*, subject to duties on its being landed,
" was a violent attack on the Liberties of *America*,
" and that it was the duty of every *American* to
" oppose the attempt." The landing of the Tea was, in fact, opposed with success in every Colony.

It is needless at this time to comment upon the nature and quality of these disturbances, and other violent proceedings in different parts of *America*. The outrage at *Boston* was certainly of such a nature as to require some interposition of the Legislature, and to shew that it was necessary to strengthen the Executive Power in that Colony; and something of this kind was looked upon as a necessary measure by

those who were at that time deemed the most strenuous in opposing the measures of the Ministry; for when Lord *N—b*, on the 14th of March, 1774, moved for leave to bring in a Bill for removing the Port of *Boston*, till full satisfaction was made to the *East-India* Company for the loss of their Tea, the debate on that day was solely concerning the mode of punishment; not a word was said to palliate the fact, though an objection was made to the indiscriminate punishment of the innocent with the guilty. It was observed by Mr. *S—e*, “ That the destruction
 “ of the Tea was entirely done by a Mob un-
 “ armed; and that, if a requisition was to be
 “ sent to *Boston*, to make satisfaction to the
 “ *East-India* Company, there could be no doubt
 “ but it would be complied with.” (a) Mr. *B—g*’s objection was, “ That this measure
 “ equally prevented the *English* Ships from tra-
 “ ding there, and was a punishment on ourselves.” Mr. *R. F—r* said, “ That he would reserve his
 “ opinion ’till he saw the Bill, which would
 “ itself shew, whether it was a punishment on
 “ the proper offenders.” (b) Mr. *D—ll* was almost the only one who declared he should give a negative to the measure; and gave his reasons at large, the principal of which were, That there was no evidence of the general concurrence of the Inhabitants of *Boston* in this outrage; that if this was intended as a punishment of the Town of *Boston*, it was partial; for other Towns equally sent back the Tea, and refused the landing. (c) Mr. *P—pps*, now Lord *M—e*, spoke in favour
 of

(a) Parl. Debates, Vol. xi. p. 83.

(b) Parl. Debates, Vol. xi. p. 82, 83.

(c) M.S.S. Debates.

of the Bill, and among other things, said, " That
 " he hoped the Declaratory Act would be re-
 " pealed; that, if *America* was let alone, she
 " would return of herself to obedience; but
 " when she saw Taxation was for experiment
 " only, she would always oppose it." Lord G——e
 C——b said, " He was not sure but the Bill
 " would be prejudicial to our own Trade."
 Colonel B——é was too eager in giving his assent
 to the proposition intended, and made use of
 that expression which caused so much laughter—
 " I think *Boston* ought to be punished; *she is your*
 " *eldest Son*: He hoped, if this measure passed
 " unanimously, that the Crown would mitigate
 " the rest of the punishment; and that perhaps
 " they could not go further, without doing it,
 " as Governor *Tryon* observed, at the muzzle of
 " their guns." (a) It is plain from hence, that,
 if the *Americans* knew every thing that passed in
 the *British* Parliament, they must know, that,
 however disposed the Opposition in this Country
 might be to counteract the measures of the Mi-
 nistry, as has been often alledged, there was not
 one among them who did not assent to this pro-
 posal for their chastisement, and making restitu-
 tion to the injured party. In the Committee on the
 Bill the 23d, Mr. R. F——r proposed an alteration,
 " That there should be an amerciamment laid upon
 " the Town of *Boston*." (b) Lord N——b differed, and
 " said, It was now our time to stand out, to defy
 " them, and to proceed with firmness and vi-
 " gour: The good of this Act is, that four or
 " five Frigates will put it in execution, *without*
 " *any military force*; the rest of the Colonies will

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" not

(a) Parl. Debates, vol. xi. p. 85.

(b) Parl. Debates, vol. xi. p. 90.

“ not take fire on the proper punishment inflicted
 “ on those who have disobeyed your authority.”
 The Stamp-Act, and the Repeal of it, having
 occasioned some little altercation, Mr. R. F—r
 got up, and said, “ We all agree that the
 “ *Bostonians* ought to be punished; but we differ
 “ in the mode of it.”(a) Mr. C—s F—x was
 for vesting the power of restoring the Port in the
 Parliament, and not in the Crown. Mr. V—n
 having, in the heat of debate, cried out, speaking
 of *Boston*, “ *Delenda est Carthago!*” Colonel B—é
 recommended coolness and moderation: he said,
 “ He was afraid this Bill drew in the fatal
 “ doctrine of submitting to Taxation: he still
 “ thought this Bill was a moderate one; but he
 “ augured, the next would be a black one.”(b)
 —The Bill having passed through the Committee,
 without any of the proposed amendments being
 adopted, it was opposed but faintly, on the third
 reading, the 25th, by Mr. D—ll, Mr. E. B—ke,
 Mr. P—ll, and Mr. S——e, (c) chiefly on
 the ground of its being too severe, and of its
 punishing indiscriminately the innocent with the
 guilty: it passed however with few negatives,
 and without any division. (d)—As soon as this
 Bill had received the Royal assent, General Gage
 was sent with it to *Boston*, where he arrived the
 13th of May, and in his first letter to Lord
Dartmouth, dated the 19th of May, says, “ The
 “ Act for shutting up the Port got here before me;
 “ and a Town-meeting was holding to consider
 “ of it at the time of my arrival in the harbour.
 “ They determined to invite the other Colonies
 “ to

(a) Parl. Deb. vol. xi. p. 99.

(b) Ibid. p. 102.

(c) Ibid. p. 103 to 116.

(d) Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 36.

“ to stop all exports and imports to and from
 “ *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, and every part of the
 “ *West-Indies*, ’till the Act be repealed.”—About
 the middle of May the House of Burgesses of
Virginia appointed the first day of June as a day
 of fasting and humiliation, “ devoutly to im-
 “ plore the Divine Interposition for averting the
 “ heavy calamities which threatened destruction to
 “ the Civil Rights of *America*, and the evils of a
 “ Civil War; and to give one heart and one mind
 “ to the People, firmly to oppose every injury to
 “ *American* Rights”—This resolution caused
 them to be dissolved. *may*

On the 24th of December, an Association was
 signed by 89 Members of the late House of Bur-
 gesses of *Virginia*; in which, among other things,
 they declare, “ That an attack on one of our
 “ Sister Colonies, to compel submission to arbi-
 “ trary Taxes, is an attack made on all *Brit-
 “ ish America*, and threatens ruin to the Rights
 “ of all, unless the united wisdom of the whole
 “ be applied;” and then recommends a General
 Congress.

On the very same day it was resolved, at a
 Town-Meeting in *Philadelphia*, “ That the Act
 “ for shutting up the Port of *Boston* is oppressive
 “ to the Inhabitants of that Town, and dan-
 “ gerous to the Liberties of the *British* Colo-
 “ nies in *America*; and that a General Congress
 “ is the most probable means of procuring relief,
 “ securing the Rights and Liberties of the Colo-
 “ nies, and re-establishing harmony with *Great-
 “ Britain*.”

At *Annapolis*, in *Maryland*, on the 25th of May,
 it was resolved unanimously, at a meeting of the
 inhabitants, “ That the late Act for shutting up
 “ the Port of *Boston* was an attack upon the Liber-
 “ ties

“ ties of *America*; that *Boston* was then suffering
 “ in the common cause; and that the Inhabi-
 “ tants of this City will join in association, on
 “ oath, with the several Counties of this Pro-
 “ vince, and with the principal Colonies in
 “ *America*, to put an immediate stop to all Ex-
 “ ports to *Great-Britain*.”

The news of the *Boston* Port-Bill did not reach *Charles-Town* so early, but as soon as it did, it caused an universal ferment. On the 6th of July, the largest body of Inhabitants assembled at the Exchange, that was ever brought together on any former occasion: they continued in deliberation three days, and formed resolutions similar to those that had been entered into by other Colonies: even in the Province of *New-York*, which was considered as the most moderate, a Committee of Correspondence, consisting of 51 persons, was appointed, the latter end of June, “ to consult on the most prudent
 “ measures to be taken at that critical juncture;” among which, Governor *Colden* observes, in his letter to Lord *Dartmouth*, dated the 1st of June, 1774, “ Care was taken to have a number of the
 “ most prudent and considerate People of the
 “ place.” (a)—And he writes on the 6th of July, “ That the measure of appointing Deputies to
 “ meet in General Congress was carried in the
 “ Committee of 51.” (b) On which the prudent Governor observes, “ These transactions are
 “ dangerous, my Lord, and illegal; but by what
 “ means shall Government prevent them? An
 “ attempt by the power of the Civil Magistrate
 “ would only shew their weakness; and as it is
 “ not easy to say upon what foundation a Military
 “ aid

(a) Parl. Reg. vol. I. p. 73.

(b) Ibid. p. 74.

“ aid should be called in, such a measure would
 “ involve us in troubles, which it is thought
 “ much more prudent to avoid, while it is yet
 “ possible things may take a more favourable
 “ turn.”

The violence of the proceedings at *Boston* need not be enlarged upon ; because this was naturally to be expected, as they were more immediately the parties affected : but it is remarkable, that their first resolution on the subject upon the 14th of May, declares, “ they *appeal to God* and the “ *World.*”—And a *solemn League and Covenant* was soon after entered into, by which the Subscribers bound themselves, in the most solemn manner, “ to suspend all commercial intercourse with “ *Great-Britain*, not to consume or purchase “ from any other, any goods whatever from “ *Great-Britain* ; and to renounce all future in- “ tercourse with such as should refuse to subscribe “ that Covenant, or a similar one.”

I could relate many other still more violent proceedings in these and other Colonies in the months of June and July ; but I purposely confine myself to such as happened in May and the beginning of June, in order to shew what the temper of the Colonies was at that period of time, when the *Boston Port-Bill* alone was the spring of their conduct, and which we have seen passed with very little opposition, and certainly without any encouragement to them to refuse making the *East-India* Company satisfaction for their loss, much less to resist the authority of the Mother Country.

We have seen that the only opposition was concerning the mode of punishment, and the severity of it ; and that this was done in a manner unusually temperate, and without any
 division

division in either House of Parliament. This last circumstance, as well as the manner of carrying on the debate, shewed, that, though the Bill was not unanimously approved of in the form in which it passed, that the opinion of those who proposed alterations was sincere, but that they would not prevent this Act from having the utmost effect that its Friends could promise themselves in bringing *America* to obedience.

Perhaps it will be said, that the reason of there being no division was, because the Opposition did not chuse to shew the weakness of their numbers; but this reason would have been equally strong against dividing the House upon the next coercive measure, of altering the Government of *Massachusetts Bay*, and the other Bills that followed, when the numbers in both Houses of Parliament were generally near, and sometimes more than four to one, particularly on the third reading of the first of those Bills, when the division was 239 to 64 only: and this disproportion in the numbers continued very great 'till about Christmas, 1777, when, after an expenditure of above Twenty Millions of money, the eyes of many independent Gentlemen, and of the Nation in general, began to open, and to see too clearly the fatal tendency of the past measures, into which they had been deceived, and the too certain prospect of future calamities. All sides of the House began then to feel the necessity (would to God it had not been too late!) of giving up the mad project of bringing *America* to our feet, and of giving up too, not only the present exercise of the right of Taxation, but even the Right itself; when, in order to make peace upon any terms with *America*, we were reduced to the disgraceful necessity of offering twenty
times

times as much as three years before would have been sufficient to have regained the affection and confidence of our Colonies! But, to return from this painful digression—Such was the conduct of the Colonies upon the first news of the *Boston* Port-Bill in the latter end of May, and beginning of June, 1774.

In the mean time Lord *N—b* proposed, in the House of Commons, the Bill “for the better regulating the Government in the Province of *Massachusetts Bay*”—and said, “he principally proposed, in this Bill, to take the Executive Power out of the hands of the Democratic part of the Government, and to alter the method of chusing Juries:” (*a*)—But Lord *G——G——e* went further, and “hoped that the Council in that Colony might be put on the same footing as the other Colonies, namely, elected by the Crown, and not by the People; and that their method of chusing Grand Juries should likewise be altered. (*b*) Let us persevere (says he) in refining that Government; and I make no doubt but things may be restored, from a state of anarchy and confusion, to peace, and a due obedience to the laws of this country.” (*c*) This speech met with the immediate thanks of the Noble Lord at the head of the Treasury; and, as Lord *G——G——e* has since declared in the House, was the immediate cause of his coming into office, on the condition of his enforcing the measures recommended in that speech.

Conformably to these ideas, the above Bill was

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(*a*) Parl. Deb. vol. xi. p. 118.

(*b*) Ibid. p. 120.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 122, and from 127 to 245.

presented to the House on the 15th of April, and also another for the impartial administration of justice in the same Province. It is very true that these Bills met with a very strenuous opposition in both Houses of Parliament: the Minority was small upon the division, as was observed before; but what was wanting in this respect was made up amply by the strength of the arguments, and the eloquence* with which they were enforced; and it is remarkable, that the debate was begun by a Gentleman who had been foremost in condemning the conduct of those who had destroyed the Tea, and in approving their punishment. (a)

These Bills did not receive the Royal Assent 'till the 20th of May; and General *Gage* writes on the 20th of July, that "they were not then arrived; that " the Merchants had not repeated their attempt to " comply with the Port-Bill, with the spirit he " hoped for." (b) He says in his letter of the 27th of August, from *Salem*, " That the Acts arrived on the 6th instant;" and after giving an account of what had been done in conformity to the two Acts, and in appointing the Council, he says, " several Members gave an account of their " respective Counties; from whence it appeared, " that the phrenzy had spread, in a greater or less " degree, through all. In consequence of the " new plan (he says) popular rage has appeared " at the extremity of the Province, abetted by " *Connecticut*. In *Worcester* they keep no terms; " openly threaten resistance by arms; have been " pur-

* Mr. *Burke's* celebrated Speech on the 19th of April, 1774; a specimen of modern eloquence, equal to any that *Greece* or *Rome* can boast.

(a) Parl. Deb. vol. xi. p. 133.

(b) Parl. Reg. vol. i. p. 43.

“purchasing arms, preparing them, casting balls,
 “ and providing powder; and threaten to attack
 “ any troops that dare to oppose them. It is
 “ agreed that popular fury was never greater in
 “ this Province than at present. *Connecticut*, I
 “ understand, *is alarmed at the alteration in this*
 “ *Charter, which occasions the commotions in this*
 “ *Province.*” (a)

The 2d of September, the Governor writes from *Boston*, “ That, though he saw things
 “ were bad when he wrote from *Salem*, he
 “ found them much worse when he arrived
 “ there; that several of the new Counsellors had
 “ been obliged to resign; that the flames of se-
 “ dition had spread universally throughout the
 “ Country, beyond conception; that *Connecticut*,
 “ and *Rhode-Island*, were as furious as in that
 “ Province; that Civil Government was near its
 “ end, the Courts of Justice expiring one after
 “ another; and that he would avoid any bloody
 “ crisis as long as possible, unless forced into it
 “ by themselves, which might happen.” (b)

This resolution, of “ avoiding any bloody crisis
 “ as long as possible”, is quite agreeable to the in-
 structions under which the Governor acted, name-
 ly, not to employ the few troops he took out with
 him, unless necessary. Vide Lord *Dartmouth's* Letter
 to General *Gage* on the 9th of April, 1774. (c)
 “ The King trusts however such necessity will
 “ not occur, and commands me to say it will be
 “ your duty to use every endeavour to avoid it.”

On the 20th of September the Governor writes,
 “ It is surprising many in the other Provinces
 “ interest themselves so much in behalf of this.

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(a) Parl. Deb. vol. i. p. 45.

(b) Ibid. p. 47.

(c) Ibid. p. 32.

“ I find they have some warm Friends in *New-York* and *Philadelphia*, and the People of *Charles-Town* are as mad as they are here.”

On the 25th he writes, “ That, upon a rumour of the Soldiers having killed six People, the whole Country was in arms, and in motion; and numerous bodies of the *Connecticut* People were on their march before the report was contradicted: That the disease was believed to be confined to the Town of *Boston*; but it was now *so universal*, there was no knowing where to apply a remedy.” (a)——On the 3d of October, “ That the spirit did not abate any where, for it was kept up with great industry; and that *the other Colonies* had espoused the cause of the *Massachusetts Bay* with great violence.” (b)——On the 30th of that month, “ That the Country was in a ferment; many parts of it, I may say, actually in arms, and ready to unite. Letters from other Provinces tell us, they are violent every where, and no decency observed, but in *New-York*. *Great-Britain* had never more occasion for wisdom, firmness, and unanimity.” (c)

The proceedings in the other Colonies were nearly the same: they all considered *Boston* as suffering in the common cause; the Acts of Parliament as unconstitutional; and united in appointing a General Congress to meet in September at *Philadelphia*. What passed in this Congress, is well known: Suffice it to say, that their first public act was a declaratory resolution, expressive

(a) Parl. Deb. vol. i. p. 52.

(b) Ibid. p. 53.

(c) Ibid. p. 56.

pressive of their disposition with respect to the Colony of *Massachusetts Bay*; approving the opposition there made to the execution of the late Acts of Parliament; and “that, if the same
 “ should be attempted to be carried into execution by force, *all America* ought to support
 “ them in their opposition; advising the People
 “ of *Boston* to conduct themselves peaceably toward General *Gage* and his Majesty’s Troops,
 “ as far as could possibly consist with their immediate safety; avoiding and discountenancing
 “ any violation of his Majesty’s property, or any
 “ insult on his Troops.” The measure they relied upon most, was an association entered into for a Non-importation and Non-consumption of any Goods, Wares, or Merchandize, from *Great-Britain* or *Ireland*, and a Non-exportation of any Commodity to *Great-Britain*, *Ireland*, or the *West-Indies*, from the 10th of September, 1775, ’till the obnoxious Acts were repealed, and other grievances redressed. In their Declaration of Rights, they expressly consent to the operation of such Acts as are *bona fide* restrained to the regulation of their external commerce: In the Petition to his Majesty, their specific grievances are stated: In their Address to the People of *Great-Britain*, they say, “Place us in the situation that we were in
 “ at the close of the last war, and our former
 “ harmony will be restored.” The Petition to his Majesty was the least exceptionable; but the other, though violent and inflammatory in some parts, shewed a determined coolness, and a fixed resolution to act in the manner so solemnly declared.

In the mean time the Parliament had been dissolved, and a new one called on the 30th of
 September,

September, which met on the 29th of November following; when the Minister, through the medium of his Majesty's Speech, professed "a firm
 " and steadfast resolution to withstand every at-
 " tempt to weaken or impair the Supreme Au-
 " thority over all the dominions of the Crown :"
 But, as the intelligence from *America* was not at that time complete, a profound silence was kept, with regard to the specific measures intended to be pursued, 'till the beginning of February, when the Minister proposed a joint Address, the purport of which was, after declaring a Rebellion actually existed in the Province of *Massachusetts Bay*, "to beseech his Majesty that he will take the
 " most effectual measures to enforce due obedience
 " to the laws and authority of the Supreme Le-
 " gislature; declaring at the same time their
 " readiness to pay attention to any real grievances
 " of his Majesty's Subjects, which should, in a
 " dutiful and constitutional manner, be laid be-
 " fore them; and that, whenever the Colonies
 " should make a proper application, they would
 " be ready to afford them every just and reasonable
 " indulgence."

The Minister intimated, at the same time, his intention of sending a greater force to *America*, and of bringing in an Act to put a stop to all the foreign Trade and Commerce of such of the Colonies as should be refractory, and particularly to prohibit their Fishing on the Banks of *Newfoundland*.

But, as these measures followed each other immediately, and were in fact parts of the same plan, I shall consider them together, and state the reasons that were urged in their support, as well as the grounds of the opposition that was made

made to them. It was urged, on the one hand,
 " That the Legislative Supremacy of Parlia-
 " ment was now at stake, and that it was resisted by
 " the universal confederacy of all the Colonies."
 The question was said " to lie within a very nar-
 " row compass ; Whether we should abandon this
 " claim, or give up every advantage arising from
 " our Sovereignty, and our Commerce ; or whe-
 " ther we should resort to measures indispensably
 " necessary on such an occasion ?(a) That Taxa-
 " tion was no longer the question ; the *Americans*
 " were actually in a state of Rebellion against the
 " Legislative Authority of this Country :(b) That
 " Independency was the object of *America* from
 " the beginning, and that any relaxation would be
 " only introductory to a further opposition on their
 " parts :(c) That this was a measure of necessity, not
 " choice ;(d) and that it was just, because it was pro-
 " voked by the most criminal disobedience."(e)
 And upon an objection being made, " That it con-
 " demned a whole country to famine, without any
 " alternative but resistance," it was said, " That the
 " only fear was, that the famine so pathetically la-
 " mented would not be produced by this Act, and
 " that there was an alternative left, which was *to sub-*
 " *mit* ;(f) that it was right that *America* should feel
 " some part of the distresses which this Country
 " could bring upon her, whilst she dared to set her
 " power

(a) Lord *N—b.* Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 133.—Lord
M—d. Vol. ii. p. 37.

(b) *Ibid.*

(c) Mr. *R—e.* Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 275.—Mr. *J—n.*
 p. 293.

(d) Lord *N—b.* *Ibid.* p. 403.

(e) Mr. Solicitor-General of *S—d.* *Ibid.* p. 293.

(f) Mr. Solicitor-General of *S—d.* *Ibid.* p. 294.

“ power in opposition to it; (a) and that, if her
 “ conduct made it necessary, still greater severity
 “ would be used.”

To this it was answered, “ That, to judge of the
 “ proper measures to be pursued, the real cause of
 “ dispute should be considered, which was Taxa-
 “ tion; that this appeared from the papers them-
 “ selves; that the Congress have expressly said,
 “ they will acquiesce in those Laws which secure
 “ the Monopoly of their Trade; and that the in-
 “ structions from *Philadelphia*, on which the pro-
 “ ceedings of the Congress were chiefly formed,
 “ avowed that doctrine in full and explicit terms: (b)
 “ That this Act would be alienating the minds of
 “ the *Americans* from us for ever, and rendering any
 “ plan of reconciliation impossible: (c) That these
 “ Bills were cruel in the highest degree, and be-
 “ yond the example of hostile rigour: (d) That
 “ Acts of Parliament may be so made, that human
 “ nature will revolt at their severity; and that
 “ *Dudley* and *Empson* were hanged for acting—ac-
 “ cording to Act of Parliament: (e) That to adopt
 “ the proposed measures would be a political *felo*
 “ *de se*; and would be like a man, who, to be re-
 “ venged of a person that he supposed had injured
 “ him, should sheathe a poniard in his own bosom: (f)
 “ That it was a Bill of war, and plunged the em-
 “ pire into civil and unnatural war; (g) that it was
 “ calculated to put an end to all that remained of the
 “ Legislative Authority of *Great-Britain*; and that
 “ the

(a) Lord N—h. Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 302.

(b) Governor J——e's Speech. Ibid. p. 159.

(c) Lord J. C——h. Ibid. p. 294.

(d) Governor J——e. Ibid. p. 175.

(e) Governor J——e. Ibid. p. 162.

(f) Lord C——n. Ibid. vol. ii. p. 40.

(g) Lord C——n. Ibid. p. 80.

“ the *Americans* would now find there was no al-
 “ ternative between slavery and resistance : (a) That
 “ the scheme of Parliament was new, and unheard
 “ of in any civilised nation, *to preserve your autho-*
 “ *riety, by destroying your dominions* : (b) That
 “ it was likewise deserving attention, whether the
 “ proposed measure of war and severity was prac-
 “ ticable, or not : That to conquer a great Conti-
 “ nent of 1800 miles, containing three millions of
 “ people, was an undertaking not to be rashly en-
 “ gaged in—Where were we to get men and money
 “ adequate to the service and expence that the re-
 “ duction of such a Continent must require?—And
 “ that it was well worth consideration, whether
 “ *France* and *Spain* would be tame inactive specta-
 “ tors of these efforts : (c) That the single Province
 “ of *Massachusetts-Bay* had at this time 30,000 men,
 “ well trained and disciplined, and could bring
 “ more than 90,000 into the field ; that they would
 “ do it when fighting for their Liberties ; and that
 “ we should not be able to conquer and keep that
 “ Province alone : (d) That the balance of loss and
 “ gain was unequal ; that, if we succeeded in redu-
 “ cing *America*, we should gain nothing ; if we did
 “ not, we might find our Revenue destroyed, our
 “ Trade annihilated, and our Empire itself over-
 “ turned : (e) That those Powers of *Europe*, whose
 “ commercial interests and naval power clashed
 “ with ours, would not sit still unconcerned, and let
 “ slip so favourable an opportunity of humbling
 “ our power, and hurting our commerce : (f) That

(a) Mr. F—x. Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 292.

(b) Mr. B—e. Ibid. p. 295.

(c) Lord C—n. Ibid. vol. ii. p. 84.

(d) Mr. W—s. Ibid. vol. i. p. 145.

(e) Lord J. C—b. Ibid. p. 141.

(f) Lord S—c. Ibid. vol. ii. p. 25.

“ it was not possible any thing on earth could give
 “ that heart-felt pleasure to *France* and *Spain*, as
 “ this unfortunate system. (a)”

In reply to all this, the reasons above given were repeated, and insisted on, with very little addition, except that, to what was said on the calamities of Civil War, and the interference of Foreign Powers, it was answered, “ That the
 “ Americans *would not fight*, and would never dare
 “ to face an *English* army: (b) That, if *America*
 “ did abound in men, it did not signify; the more
 “ the better; the easier would be the conquest;
 “ and that, if they did not run away, they would
 “ be starved into a compliance with our mea-
 “ sures; and that this was too trifling a part of the
 “ argument to insist upon. ” (c) With regard to the interference of Foreign Powers, it was said in general, in the House of Commons, “ That fears
 “ of that kind were ill founded:” And, in the House of Peers, the Noble Lord (d) who was Secretary of State for the Southern Department, declared,
 “ He had received the most full and unreserved
 “ assurances, that the *French* Court would pro-
 “ hibit all Commerce with the *British* Colonies;
 “ and that he had every reason to believe *France*
 “ sincere, as well by the pacific temper that pre-
 “ vailed in that Country, as from the perma-
 “ nent policy both of *France* and *Spain*, who
 “ were determined, on their own account, against
 “ countenancing, abetting, and bringing into
 “ precedent, any measure which might operate
 “ as an encouragement to the Colonies in the
 “ New

(a) Lord J——m. Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 156.

(b) Colonel G——t. Ibid. p. 135.—Mr. R——y. Ibid.

p. 421.

(c) Lord S——b. Ibid. p. 89, 90.

(d) Lord R——d.

“ New World, to render themselves independent
“ of the Parent State.” (a)

Such were the various opinions, on this side the *Atlantic*, concerning the proper measures to be pursued relative to *America*: But, whilst the Ministry were preparing further modes of coercion and punishment, and arguing upon the probable effects they would have upon the conduct of *America*, affairs came to a crisis in that Country, as might easily have been foreseen: Resistance by Arms had been long openly avowed, and was at length effected.

Having shewn so much at large the real temper of *America*, uninfluenced by any other causes than its own sensibility, it would be idle to contend, that the Rebellion, which was at the opening of the Session declared to exist, should be owing to any opposition that was made in Parliament to the Address, or to the Acts that soon after passed in consequence of it. It is plain, from the proceedings in *America* above stated, that there was occasion rather of water to extinguish the flame, than of fuel to feed it. No wonder, then, that this Address, and these Acts of Parliament, were so strenuously opposed in both Houses: And, to shew that this was not done merely *for the sake of opposition*, *persons of confessedly great abilities in both Houses, to say no more, did propose plans of reconciliation, as little derogatory to the honour, and as much conducive to the interest, of *Great-Britain*, as the situation of the two Countries would admit.

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Not

(a) Lord R——d. Parl. Register, vol. ii. p. 48.

* Lord Cb——m, and Lord Sb——e, in the House of Lords; Mr. B——ke, and Mr. H——y, in the House of Commons.

Not that I mean now to enter into either of these plans, or the particular debates upon them: Suffice it to say, that the spirit of all of them was peace, diametrically opposite to that of the measures adopted by the Ministry.

But I must here do justice to the Noble Lord at the head of the Treasury, in stating a proposition he made, as part of the plan mentioned at the opening of the Session, and, I believe, meant as a ground of conciliation; namely, "That it is the opinion of the Committee, that when any Colony should propose to make provision for contributing its proportion to the common defence, such proportion to be raised under the authority of their own Assemblies, disposable by Parliament, it will be proper, *if such proposal shall be approved of by his Majesty in Parliament, to forbear to levy any Duties on such Colony, except only such as it may be expedient to impose for the regulation of Commerce: the nett produce of these last-mentioned Duties to be carried to the account of such Colony,*" &c. "This proposition," he thought, "was such a one as would be a good and wise one, even in the hour of victory itself. Whether the *Americans* would accede to it, or not, was uncertain; but, if their outward pretensions were the real principles of their conduct, they must, consistently with those principles, agree to this proposition."^(a)

This measure, however, had the fate, as all trimming measures have, of not being liked thoroughly by either party. Many of the Noble Lord's Friends thought it went too far; and the other side of the House objected to it, because it did not go far enough, and because the expectation

(a) Parl. Register, vol. i. p. 197.

tion was avowed of its not being accepted by the *Americans* in general; but of dividing them, under a pretence of distinguishing those who acted upon principle, from those who wished only to profit by the general ruin and confusion. (a) But, however sincere the Noble Lord might be in making this proposition, as he has often declared, it was evident at the time, and experience has confirmed it, that it went but a very little way towards meeting the claims *as they then stood* in *America*, which were not at that time confined to the exercise of the right of Taxation, but at least extended to a repeal of the coercive Acts passed the preceding Session: And on the subject of Taxation alone, the proposition was so loose, that no criterion was mentioned for ascertaining what the proper proportion was; and it was so mysteriously worded, that it appeared afterwards, the person who made it, understood it in a different sense from what the words would bear.

In fact, this proposition regulates only the *mode* of Taxation: It puts no boundary to the exercise of it; the terms will not bear such a construction. But, whether this is so or not, let us see how it was understood in *America*; for it was in July following referred to the consideration of the Congress by the Assemblies of *New Jersey*, *Pensylvania*, and *Virginia*. “We are of opinion, that the proposition contained in this resolution is unreasonable and insidious: Unreasonable, because, if we declare we accede to it, we declare, without reservation, we will purchase the favour of Parliament, not knowing, at the same time, at what price they will please to estimate that favour: It is insidious, because individual Colonies,

(a) Parl. Reg. vol. i. p. 210.

“ Colonies, having bid and bidden again, ’till
 “ they find the avidity of the Seller too great for
 “ all their powers to satisfy, are then to return
 “ into opposition, divided from their Sister Co-
 “ lonies, whom the Minister will have previously
 “ detached by a grant of easier terms, or by an
 “ artful procrastination of a definitive answer.
 “ Again, we are of opinion, the proposition is
 “ altogether unsatisfactory, because it imports
 “ only a *suspension* of the Mode, not a renuncia-
 “ tion of the pretended Right to tax us; because,
 “ too, it does not propose to repeal the several
 “ Acts of Parliament passed.” And then they
 enumerate the Acts of the last and current Sessions.
 It appears, therefore, it was upon too good ground
 the Opposition objected to this, as futile and nu-
 gatory.

The Congress met again on the 10th of May,
 1775, and finding that their Petition was ne-
 glected, and that their Complaints, far from being
 attended to, had produced only measures of still
 greater severity, prepared, in the months of May
 and June, for open resistance by force of arms;
 and, on the 6th of July, published a Declaration,
 setting forth their reasons for taking up arms;
 notwithstanding which, so infatuated were the
 Ministry, that in the very last debate this Session,
 the latter end of May, the Minister said, “ he
 “ would venture to affirm, the dispute with
 “ *America* was not so alarming as some People
 “ apprehended; he had not the least doubt this
 “ dispute would end speedily, happily, and with-
 “ out bloodshed.” (a)

The relation of these events, in the order of
 time in which they happened, is itself the fullest
 justification

(a) Lord N~~or~~^{or}b. Parl. Reg. vol. i, p. 483.

justification of the conduct of those who have opposed the measures of the Ministry relating to *America* during the first, second, and third Sessions of the fourteenth Parliament of *Great-Britain*. I have been thus particular in relating the leading principles of both Parties during the first Session, because they continued their leading principles to the Session before the last, namely, 'till about Christmas 1777; when, after having made the most spirited exertions, and called forth all the resources of the Nation in vain, the Minister was obliged, from necessity, (which he was not ashamed to confess) to propose a Plan infinitely more humiliating than what had been repeatedly proposed by the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and less advantageous than what the *Americans* had themselves repeatedly requested.

It is a painful task, to one who has no private connection with *America*, and who was a Friend to her only as being a part of the Empire of *Great-Britain*, to be obliged to refer to transactions so little to the honour of his own Country. Nobody can lament them more sincerely than I do; but in the work imposed upon me by the illiberal attack of the Author above mentioned, it was necessary to state in order the progressive steps taken by both Countries, as well as the grounds of the opposition to the measures of Administration; as without this it is impossible to judge fairly of the merit or demerit of either Party: But, in stating the subsequent events, I shall be as concise as possible; because they become every year more recent, and stand less in need of particular relation or comment.

The Congress having at length entered into Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union,
and

and having created a Military Establishment, and published a Declaration setting forth the causes of their taking up arms, immediately appointed a Commander in Chief, who, in the beginning of July, arrived at the camp before *Boston*, where the King's Troops had been blockaded ever since the affair at *Bunker's-Hill*: But, though there were several skirmishes during the summer, there was no important action in that part of *America*; nor did the events in *Canada* or *Virginia* at all justify the opinion of those who thought it would be an easy matter to bring *America* to obedience by force of arms.

It should have been remarked, that before the Congress broke up in July, 1775, they prepared a second Petition to his Majesty; in which they beseech his Majesty, "That he will direct some mode, by which the united application of his Colonists to the Throne may be improved into *a happy and permanent reconciliation.*"—Another Address was made likewise to the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, in which they again "profess their submission to the several Acts of Trade and Navigation passed before the year 1763; and that they cheerfully consent to the operation of such Acts of the *British* Parliament, as shall be restrained to the regulation of their External Commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole Empire to the Mother Country."

Whether these professions were sincere or not, and how far they were consistent with preparations for the most vigorous resistance, it is not within the compass of my design to enquire; nor do I by any means undertake to defend their measures: But certainly, whatever were the motives of the
Americans,

Americans, and whatever punishment they might deserve, these solemn declarations afforded a fair excuse, if any was wanting, to the Mother Country, to propose some terms, besides those of unconditional submission, or at least to declare in explicit terms the fair and equitable footing the Ministry meant to put them (the Colonies) upon, *after they were conquered.*

On the meeting of Parliament in October, the most decisive exertions were recommended by Administration, chiefly on the ground, "That
" the rebellious war was become general, and
" manifestly carried on for the purpose of esta-
" blishing an independent Empire." At the same time, a readiness was declared "to receive the
" misdeeds with tenderness and mercy, when they
" became sensible of their error; and that, for this
" purpose, authority should be given to certain
" persons on the spot, to grant general and parti-
" cular pardons and indemnities, and to receive
" the submission of any Colony that should be
" disposed to return to its allegiance."

In the Debates before Christmas, intimation was given, "that, though a larger force would be
" sent out, it would be accompanied with a Plan
" of Accommodation;" (a) tho' the Ministry did not appear to be at all agreed on this head: (b) And certainly the Declaration in his Majesty's Speech did not go further than to propose the giving an authority to grant pardons and receive submissions, which was very short of any Plan of Accommodation. Much anxiety however was shewn, on the part of Opposition, for the Minister

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(a) Lord N—b. Parl. Reg. vol. iii. p. 60. Ibid. p. 135.
Sir G. E——t. Ibid. p. 69. Gov. P——t. Ibid. p. 133.
(b) Mr. J——n. Ibid. p. 149.

to produce his plan; which being put off from day to day, at length a plan of this nature was produced on the other side, chiefly founded on giving up the exercise of the Right of Taxation. The previous question was put, upon the motion to bring in a Bill for this purpose, by a Gentleman not then in Administration, chiefly on the ground, "that the proposition would not produce "the effect proposed; and that, as the Speech had "announced some plan, it should be disposed of "first." (a) This was seconded by the new Secretary of State, who said, "he thought it had "been fully proved, that the proposition would "not answer the expectation of those in *America*, "whose confidence was meant to be gained; and "that previous concessions, without any thing "offered on their part, would put us upon worse "ground; that his idea of sending Commissioners "was, that they should not only have power to "pardon, but to enquire into grievances:" (b) And the Minister, without stating his own ideas, contented himself with saying, "That it appeared clearly these concessions proposed would "not be sufficient." (c) And thus the Bill was negatived by a majority of two to one.

A very few days afterwards, the Minister moved a Bill of a very different nature, namely, to prohibit all Trade and Intercourse with the Colonies; but it was declared, that, besides purposes of punishment, it was to enable his Majesty to appoint Commissioners to grant pardons, receive submissions, and enquire into any matter, or change of circumstance, in the Colonies. There is

(a) Governor P——ll. Parl. Register, vol. iii. p. 193.

(b) Lord G——G——e. Ibid. p. 194.

(c) Lord N——b. Ibid. p. 195.

is no occasion to go over all the arguments that were urged in recommendation of either of these measures; they were much of the same nature with those made use of last Session. It is necessary to observe, that what was urged with regard to Foreign Powers, was not paid the least attention to. (a) The principles of both parties being thus finally declared, it is needless to relate the various steps that were taken by Opposition, in the course of the Session, to infuse peace into the measures of Administration; but, instead of this having any effect, the last day but one of the Session, the Minister declared, that the Commissioners were not empowered *to treat*, but only to *confer and enquire* into the grounds of peace: And the Noble Lord at the head of the *American* Department said, "That no commission, founded on that
" Act, could empower Commissioners to treat
" *with Rebels in arms*; that, if any Colony was
" disposed to return to its allegiance, the Com-
" missioners were empowered to confer, and to
" encourage such dispositions, in order to give
" peace; but they were not to treat on the terms
" of the Submission of the Colonies, or on the
" Right of Taxation." (b).

What passed this summer on the other side of the *Atlantic*, is of too much importance not to be in every body's remembrance. The Two noble-minded Brothers took as much pains in their capacity as Commissioners, as they did in their situations in the Army and Navy, but not with the same success; for, besides that the Colonies had, before the arrival of the Commissioners, declared

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themselves

(a) Mr. C——//. Parl. Register, vol. iii. p. 240, 254.

(b) Lord N——b. Ibid. vol. iv. p. 124. Lord G——
G——e. Ibid. p. 128.

themselves an Independent State, which was of itself the most insurmountable bar yet placed in the way of reconciliation, the Commission was confined to the mere power of granting pardons, and declaring any Colony that submitted, to be in the King's peace; and the conference with a Committee of the Congress, on this subject, soon broke up, on the want of further power in the Commissioners, who could only confer and consult, but not treat, on the grievances of which the *Americans* complained: and the Committee from the Congress sum up their account of this Conference in the following words: " And we apprehend any expectation from such a power, would have been too *uncertain and precarious* to have been relied on by *America*, had she still continued in her state of Dependence."

The next Session began as early as the last, the latter end of October. The events of the summer in *America* seemed to have confirmed each party in their sentiments; namely, the one, of drawing forth all the resources of the Nation, in order to reduce the *Americans* to obedience, before any further concessions were made; the other, of taking every opportunity of promoting an enquiry into the grievances of *America*, and taking steps to redress them, previous to any submission to be expected on their part: And this last opinion was still defended, not upon the ground of justice, (for the sword was now drawn on both sides) but, in the first place, upon the impracticability of conquering *America*, upon the ruin a perseverance would in the end bring on our Trade and Finances, and upon the danger to which, from such perseverance, we should be exposed from the House of *Bourbon*: And, indeed, those,

those who were at all acquainted at the time with the transactions of the last Campaign in *America*, with the enormous expence it was to this Country, and with the evident encouragement given to *America* by the *French*, without having recourse to subsequent events, will not wonder that the most strenuous efforts were made, even so late as the last week of the Session, viz. the 30th of May, 1777, to lay the ground of an accommodation: And it is curious to observe, that the main argument used on the other side, for not coming into any proposals of this nature in May, 1777, was an assertion, that, as *America* had a design of establishing her Independence from the beginning, any concessions short of that would now be fruitless; so much were the sentiments of the Ministry changed since March, 1774, when the *Boston* Port Bill was passed, in a confidence that no other part of *America* would interest itself in the dispute, or would resist by force of arms; and so little apprehensive were they that they should be obliged in the very next Session, from a necessity that was confessed, to offer terms, and make concessions alone founded on a contrary supposition.

But it does not come within my present undertaking, to shew the inconsistency of Ministers, and to point out the various and contradictory grounds they have taken, at periods of time very little distant from each other. This is not now the moment of enquiry, or reprehension; nor could even thus much have been extorted from my pen, if it had not been provoked by an unjust and unwarrantable attack on those, whose crime seems to be, that they have not concurred in, and contributed to their Country's ruin; but, on the contrary, have done all in their power to prevent it. An attempt of this nature shews only the poverty of
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the cause; and that the Author, despairing to justify and defend the conduct of Administration, contents himself with aspersing the character of their Opponents, who, as the event has shewn, have been all along the real Friends of their Country: But there is this difference at least between the two parties, obvious to every impartial observer, that, if the Advocates of the present Ministry could make out their preposterous and absurd accusations of the Opposition, this would be no exculpation of themselves; whereas, if it can be proved, (and the thing speaks but too plainly for itself) that the measures which have been constantly opposed, are the measures that have brought such unprecedented misfortunes on the Nation, then is such proof the most ample justification of Opposition, and itself the highest eulogium upon their conduct. But it may still be said, by those who either have, or pretend to have, so bad an opinion of human nature, and of the first Families in this Country for Public Virtue, as well as for high Rank and independent Fortunes, “ That it does not follow, because the event has shewn the Opposition to have been right, that therefore such opposition proceeded from good motives; or that, because the Ministry have been to blame, they deserve applause; for that their *Opposition* proceeded from ambition only, and was solely owing to a desire of counter-acting every thing proposed by those, whose stations alone they coveted; and that, let what would have been the measures of Government, they would have been equally opposed and thwarted.”

Now, though to disprove this insinuation (for it is no more) I might safely appeal to the spirit of

of the Debates themselves, the internal proof of their sincerity; I shall only desire the Reader to suspend his judgement, 'till he reflects upon the conduct of that Party the very next Session, I mean the Session before the last, when the Ministry were obliged, on account of the immense expence of the undertaking, and also the at-length-avowed interposition of *France*, to make the most ample concessions, and to contradict every argument, and every pretence, given for not doing it before.

The victories in *Pennsylvania*, more than the defeat at *Saratoga*, opened the eyes of the Nation: Many Country Gentlemen acknowledged themselves to have been seduced and deceived by the Ministry; and the Minority, in February 1778, was swelled into double its usual number, being 165 instead of 87 or 88. Thus strengthened, what was the conduct of this Minority, when the Minister in the same month moved his Conciliatory Bills, in one of which he gave up the exercise of the right of Taxation in form, and in the other, gave the most extensive powers for redressing the Grievances of which the *Americans* complained? —Although these were terms little different, except in their extent, from what had been so often in vain proposed, for three successive years, by the other side of the House, they were at once acceded to with joy and gladness; every assistance was offered, party disputes were forgot, and even one of their most zealous Opponents lent his aid to carry these Acts into execution. But the face of things was now altered from what it had been, not three years only, but three months ago: News had arrived of one Army's being defeated, of another's being victorious without effect: The
avowed

avowed motives of these Bills was necessity, and not a change of system from principle; a Treaty made with *France* during the recess of the holidays: All these circumstances co-operated to prevent these Bills having the desired effect. They passed both Houses of Parliament without any division; and, though there were some interesting debates upon them in the House of Lords, they were more upon their form and adequacy than upon their spirit and tendency. I refer to the Debates of this period, for the moderation and the candour of those who had all along used the very language, and the very sentiments, now urged by the Ministry in support of these Bills, though in a very different situation of affairs. The other principal matters of discussion in the remaining part of this Session were concerning the *French* Rescript, the sailing of the *French* Fleet, the state of our own Navy, and whether it might not be advisable to give further powers to the Commissioners to enable them to make a federal alliance with America, if they should find they could not treat with them as Subjects.

The *French* Rescript had been long foretold, but not provided against. The sailing of the *Toulon* Fleet ought to have been prevented, and was very near being the destruction of our force under Lord *Howe*. The state of our own Navy was inferior to what had been directly promised by the Noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty; and the situation of affairs was now so much altered in *America*, that it became a question, whether it would be possible to regain it even by these concessions; and whether it might not be adviseable to make an alliance with her, as an independent, if we could not do it as a dependent State. This last
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was certainly a nice question; but, as a proof that it was not brought on merely to distress and harraßs the Ministry, it must be remembered, that it was moved by a Country Gentleman of the first integrity, and the most disinterested principles; that many of those who are esteemed the most zealous in Opposition were against the motion; and that it was the decided opinion of the greatest Statesman this Country ever knew, and whom she soon after had the misfortune to lose, (a) not to give way to it. This justice however must be done to those who held the former opinion, that it was apparent, from the reasons they gave, none could more deplore any dismemberment of the Empire than themselves: it was fairly discussed as a matter of policy; and it must be confessed, that the terms held out by the Commissioners themselves, were little short of acknowledging their Independence.

Having thus, from a detail of the conduct of the Opposition, refuted the charge of the Rebellion in *America* having been owing to their measures, I shall not waste much time in shewing the absurdity of such a charge, and the impossibility of such effects having arisen from so slight a cause, even supposing this cause had not been disproved by dates and facts which cannot be questioned. To suppose that the People of *America* would submit to the distresses they have undoubtedly felt since the commencement of the war, not from sensations of their own, but out of compliment to the Opposition, who never took any other steps, except in their Legislative capacity, to assist them, is too great an absurdity to require a serious refutation. The event has

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but

(a) Lord Cb——m.

but too clearly proved, that those who were stigmatised with the name of the Friends of *America*, were in fact the best Friends of *Great-Britain*; the Empire of which might still have remained whole and entire, if their advice had been pursued in time.

But, besides fomenting a Rebellion in the Colonies, the Opposition are charged "with promoting a foreign War, and, by exposing the pretended weakness of *Great-Britain*, with erecting a combination of powerful States, not only against her interest, but her very existence." Now, I need not ask the candid Reader, Which measures have tended most to promote a foreign War, those of Administration, or Opposition. The measures recommended in vain by the latter, were such as would have kept our resources entire, and our Empire undivided; those pursued by the Ministry have exhausted the one, and lost half the other. When the obvious consequences have been foretold, they have been treated with ridicule and contempt; and, when those consequences have in fact come to pass, then they are laid to the account of those who foretold them, and would have prevented them by a contrary conduct. But it is said, "this has been done by exposing our weakness." Now, though it is true that the consequences of pursuing the system of conquest were painted in the most lively colours, among which, one was the exhausted state this Country would be in, at the end of this struggle, to cope with any foreign Enemy; and every Man has now reason to lament it was not attended to at that time; yet I affirm, that, when that unanswerable argument had failed in the proper stage to urge it, none have been more active in strengthening

strengthening the hands of his Majesty, and encouraging vigour and exertion against the common Enemy, than the Members in Opposition.

On the delivery of the *French* Rescript in *March* 1778, Sir G— T——e declared, “the insult ought to be resented, and the injury repelled, and that he did not doubt but we had strength and spirit to do it.” (a) As to an invasion, General C——y said, “he did not adopt the fears People had expressed, nor did he see the case so dangerous as had been represented; for that we had, including the Militia, Thirty-three Thousand Troops, with which we could take the field. (b)”

In the beginning of May, when it was known that the *Toulon* Fleet had sailed, Administration were charged with inactivity, in not preventing it, as we were now, it was said, engaged in a war with our natural Enemies, the *French*, and therefore the most vigorous exertions ought to be made; (c) and the very last week of this Session, on a motion by a Member in Opposition, for an Address to his Majesty, to express a readiness to agree to any further Conciliatory Measures, it is there declared, “That the Commons of *Great-Britain* stand always prepared to resent every insult, and to repel every attack upon the dignity of his Majesty’s Crown, and the National Honour. (d)”

In the House of Lords, the general indignation against the *French* was equally conspicuous; but this was accompanied with the severest censures of the Ministry, by whose evil counsels, it was said,

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(a) Parl. Reg. vol. ix. p. 48.

(b) Ibid. p. 68.

(c) Mr. T, T——d. Ibid. p. 168.

(d) Ibid. p. 245.

said, we were plunged into our present distress. It was contended, indeed, by one part of the Opposition, "that, in order to prevent a war with *France*, under such disadvantages, we should not stand upon forms with *America*, but make an alliance with her, even as an Independent State, rather than have a war with *France* and *America* at the same time; and that, if we were at peace with *America* on this footing, there was in fact nothing to go to war about:" But this opinion was combated with great ability by a Noble Lord on the same side of the House, who shewed, "That a war with *France* was unavoidable;" and, at the same time, gave some admirable hints concerning the mode of conducting and pursuing it with vigour. (a)

As to the question, of allowing the Independence of *America*, the same difference of opinion prevailed among the Opposition in this, as well as in the other House of Parliament. The Noble Lord above alluded to, and another Noble Earl, whom this Country had the misfortune soon after to lose, set this matter in a new light, and painted the ill policy of it in the most striking colours. (a) —In the course of these debates, the most vigorous exertions were recommended against the common Enemy; the vulnerable parts, both of *France* and *Spain*, were hinted at, and the resources of this Country enlarged upon: (a) And a Noble Earl particularly declared, "That he did not think *France* would make any more than an appearance of a descent in *England*;" and that he was persuaded, had we Ministers, "capable of properly distributing and conducting the

(a) Lord S——e, and Lord C——m. Parl. Reg. vol. x. p. 323, 369, 376, to 396.

“ the force still left in this kingdom, we should
 “ be able to revive the former superiority we
 “ had last war, and put a speedy end to all
 “ the threats and menaces of our Enemies. (a)”
 —Was this exposing the weakness of *Great-Britain*?—Was not this, on the contrary, making the most of our situation? though it was too well known abroad, and too severely felt home, to be concealed, and consequently for any injury to proceed from its being exposed.

I now proceed to confute the particular Charges in the Pamphlet above mentioned. And, in the first place, the design of the work is apparent; it is, to decry the characters of the most able and virtuous Men in this nation, many of whom the Ministry have attempted to seduce to their interest, in order to insure their own stations. This is evident from the following paragraph:—
 “ Upon the whole, we may fairly affirm, that
 “ neither the talents they possess, nor the conduct they have pursued, are likely to recommend Opposition as proper persons for managing public affairs at the present crisis.” (b)
 Thus is the secret spring of all these illiberal aspersions, and partial quotations, disclosed, to persuade the Public, that the present Ministers are the fittest persons to continue in the management of Public Affairs, not on account of their own abilities, or the wisdom of their past measures, which there is not even an attempt to justify, but on account of the conduct of the Opposition, thus grossly misrepresented.

But let me ask, what temptations are there now

(a) Lord S———, and Lord B———. *Parl. Reg.* vol. x. p. 422.

(b) *Short History*, p. 52.

now for Men of virtue and ability to take the reins of Government?—Not all the wisdom of a *Burleigh*, or a *Chatham*, could restore this Nation to its former prosperity; and, in the present situation of affairs, they must be bold, as well as great and disinterested Men, that will venture to take the helm in such a storm. It is not the least of our misfortunes, that neither a change of Men nor Measures can replace us in the same situation we held some years ago in the balance of *Europe*; though it is another consideration, how much longer both Houses of Parliament will submit to be governed by the counsels of those, under whose administration so much has been already lost.

The Author of this Short History thinks it answers his purposes better, to extract single sentences out of the speeches of Opposition, without stating the scope of the speech, or even the particular motion under consideration. The first extracts (a) he makes are, without mentioning the motion or proposed amendment, from the debate on the Address to his Majesty for his Speech the first day of the Session, and on the amendment proposed, “to assure his Majesty, that the House was ready to give the most ample support to such measures as may be thought necessary for the defence of these Kingdoms, and frustrating the designs of *France*; but that they thought it one of the most important duties to enquire by what fatal counsels, or unhappy system of policy, this Country was reduced from its splendid situation.” He says, “As the public misfortunes may be deduced from the rebellion in *America*, they [*the Opposition*] asserted, contrary to fact, that

“hostilities

(a) Short Hist. p. 6 and 7.

“ hostilities had been first commenced by Go-
 “ vernment : They recurred to their usual pro-
 “ phecies as to foreign wars, and went so far as
 “ to arm *Holland*, our ancient Ally, against these
 “ devoted kingdoms : To sow discontents among
 “ the Militia, they alledge the Officers had been
 “ scandalously neglected, &c. &c.” Can any
 body deny that this Country was fallen from
 the splendid situation, which in the early part
 of his Majesty’s reign had made her the envy of
 all *Europe* ? In stating the causes of this alte-
 ration, those who began this war in *America* by
 their fatal counsels, may be fairly said to have
 been the disturbers of the public tranquillity after
 a ten years peace. As to *Holland*, it was only
 said, “ That some information should be given
 “ by the Minister on those heads, before unani-
 “ mity was called for.” (a) With regard to the
 Militia, it was observed, “ That his Majesty
 “ made honourable mention of them in his
 “ Speech, and therefore that the Address ought
 “ to contain a compliment to their ardour and
 “ public spirit.” (b)

Another ground of the proposed enquiry was,
 the dissatisfaction shewn with the Generals em-
 ployed in *America*, and with the Admiral em-
 ployed at home, who, notwithstanding he had
 uniformly spoke and acted in opposition, did not
 decline the command in a perilous conjuncture.
 This dissatisfaction was then indeed disavowed ;
 but the subsequent treatment they received from
 the Noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty,
 and of the *American* Department, have left no
 doubt

(a) Mr. T——d. Parl. Register, vol. xi. p. 3.

(b) Mr. T——d. MSS. Debates, and Parl. Register,
 vol. xi. p. 3.—Colonel B—e. Ibid, p. 60.

doubt from what quarter such repeated assertions proceeded.

His Majesty's Speech was indeed, according to the established usage of Parliament, considered as the speech of the Minister, and accordingly treated with freedom. Having lamented therefore that his efforts had not been attended with all the success which the justice of his cause, and the vigour of his exertions, seemed to promise, it was said, "That, considering Ad——l K——ll
" was sent out at first with Twenty Sail of the
" Line to meet Thirty,—that Lord H—e's Fleet
" would have been annihilated by *D'Estaing's*
" Squadron, if it had arrived three days sooner,
" and which was preserved only, when he did
" arrive, by the skill and bravery of the Noble
" Lord who commanded the Fleet on that side
" the *Atlantic*, that we had more success than
" could have been expected from such misconduct
" in Administration; and that our escapes were
" entirely owing to good fortune, and the skill
" of our Commanders, who consequently did
" not deserve this implied censure upon them,
" when in fact it belonged to their em-
" ployers." (a) This is the contradiction in terms so much exclaimed against by the Author above mentioned, who passes over many important charges urged as grounds of the motion; (b) and takes a great deal of pains (c) to combat an opinion given in the course of the debate, (but having nothing to do with the motion) concerning the mode of carrying on the war in its complicated state, namely, to withdraw all
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(a) Mr. F—x. Parl. Register, vol. xi. p. 5, 6.

(b) Mr. F—x. Ibid. p. 8, 9.

(c) Short History, &c. p. 8.

our forces from *America*, except such as should be necessary to keep the few places we already possessed, and to make *France* the object of our attack.

Whether this was a right measure, or not, is another question; but certainly very able and powerful reasons were given in support of it, which were drawn principally from the different motives that induced *America* and *France* to enter into the war, and the different relations they stood in to the Mother Country. It was said, "The motives of the *French* were interest; and therefore we should direct our blows against them, in order to shew them they will suffer more by a continuance of the war, than reap advantages from their new alliance: That *France* must be made to feel present distress, and find out that she has made a bad bargain; which would soon force her to desert her new Ally: That the war with *America* was of a different nature; that it was a war of passion and enthusiasm: no matter what gave birth to that enthusiasm; it inspired a spirit that was unconquerable, and solicitous to undergo difficulties and dangers: And that, besides, every blow that was struck in *America* was against ourselves, and all idea of reconciliation; and against our own interest, if we should be able to bring it back to dependence." (a) I appeal to the scope of the Debates on this day, whether this was not the nature of the arguments used upon this subject in the House of Commons.

The Speeches in the other House are still more misrepresented; and not only the sense of particular passages perverted, but many others coined to

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answer

(a) Mr. Fox. Parl. Register, vol. xi. p. 10, 11.

answer the Author's purpose, with a reference to (*Vide Opposition Speeches, passim*) such as, "That
 " nothing could save the Empire, but imploring
 " the forgiveness of *America*, and acknowledging
 " her Independence; and that it would be im-
 " prudent, if not impossible, to persist in a war
 " against *France*."

The next subject, upon which this Author exercises his talent of misrepresentation, (a) is the disagreeable necessity to which General B—e, Sir W—H—e, and Ad—l K—ll, were reduced, either of defending their characters under many disadvantages, or of losing them. Of the military conduct of the first I shall say little, because he most ardently expects, and has been promised, a further enquiry into it; but with regard to Sir W—H—e, it is notorious, that, though he might be received with apparent attention by the Ministry, they were, under-hand, throwing all the blame of ill success upon his shoulders, which was at length avowed in Parliament before the end of the Session, as shall be explained in its proper place.

In the account the Author gives of the Trial and Acquittal of Ad—l K—ll, he is reduced to the dilemma of acknowledging, "That the
 " maxim of selecting Men of *opposing* principles
 " may have had its foundation in liberal senti-
 " ments;" (b) but, if the Opposition hold principles imputed to them by this Author, this is but a sorry excuse for employing them: The fact is, and the Ministry know it, that Men of the first abilities, as well as the most unspotted integrity, are among the Body that pass by that name; and they therefore endeavour to detach them, one by one, from their party, and make use

(a) Short Hist. p. 11, 12, 13.

(b) Ibid. p. 13, 15.

use of the extreme distress of the Nation, and the necessity they are under of their assistance, as a plea for this purpose; But this has not hitherto had the desired effect in any instance; for, though these persons, of great liberality and spirit, have not withheld their assistance, when thus called for in a time of danger, and have done their utmost against the common Enemy, yet their political opinions have been retained, and their conduct in Parliament has continued to be disinterested and independent. This has been notoriously the case with Adm—l K—ll, and Gov—r J—e, and with Sir W—m and Lord H—e. The first of these (Adm—l K—ll) stands too high in the opinion of his Country, to suffer in the least from the misrepresentations of this Author: His trial stopped even the mouth of Envy; and, whether his accusation was a malicious one or not, it certainly has been of as much service to him, as if it proceeded from the most exalted friendship. In order, however, to invent a ground of abuse, this Author is driven to the necessity of proving, or endeavouring to prove, that the accusation of Adm—l K—ll, by Sir H— Pa—r, “was a trap laid by the Opposition.” (a)—This is ingenious; but the whole transaction is too recent in the memory of the Public, to be glossed over in such colours. With much more plausibility might it be said, that it was a trap laid by the Admiralty to ruin the brave Commander. If so, they were caught in their own snares, as this fact came out undeniably, that the want of complete victory was not the fault of the Admiral who commanded; and certainly the evidence, given on his trial, shewed so much zeal and abilities, exerted in the service of

(a) Short Hist. p. 13, 15.

of his Country, as to deserve the thanks of that Country, even though the victory, from other circumstances, was not complete, and though his own conduct had been less noble, or his Adversary's less malicious. But the Author says, "Sir *H—P—r*, conscious of deserving "praise, instead of censure, for his behaviour, "became irritated at the injustice done to "his reputation; from being accused, he became the accuser. In this circumstance alone, "as it afterwards appeared, the gallant Vice- "Admiral was to blame." (a) Now, it is very difficult to comprehend, how the consciousness of his own innocence should induce him to attack another, rather than justify himself: nor did it afterwards appear, that his becoming the accuser was the only circumstance in which he was to blame; for the verdict of the Court-Martial itself declared him blameable for not making the distressed situation of his ship known to the Admiral by the *Fox*, or otherwise. (b).

Much less did it appear, as is asserted, (c) that on the Trial of the Admiral, "though "the Accuser had not brought his charges to "the standard of legal proof, the Accused did "not exculpate himself to the satisfaction of "the Public."—For the falsity of this last assertion, I need only appeal to the Public itself, which was unanimous in expressing their satisfaction at his most honourable acquittal. (d) It is observeable, that the Author has not dared to refer

(a) Short Hist. p. 13, 15.

(b) The Verdict of the Court-Martial on V—Ad—l Sir *H—P—r*.

(c) Short Hist. p. 19.

(d) The Speech of the Speaker to Admiral *K—ll*, and the thanks of the House of Lords.

refer to one single authority for any part of this curious narration, which takes up no less than eight pages of his Short History.

His next subject is the State of the Navy the preceding summer; and this is the only part of the Pamphlet, where the Author has been hardy enough to attempt a Defence of his own Friends, rather than an Attack upon their Opponents. He perceived that it would be too much to deny, that it had been solemnly asserted in December, 1777, by the Noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, viz. "That we had Thirty-five Ships of the Line, completely manned, (a) and had a Navy fully adequate to meet the whole force of the House of *Bourbon* in the first instance; that, should they entertain any hostile intentions, the remainder of our force was in *such a state of preparation*, as would render it much superior to any *France* and *Spain* could send against us; and that he was not ashamed to say, it was *the duty* of the First Lord of the Admiralty, *to have a Fleet superior to any thing these Powers may be able to send to sea.*" (b)

The fact of Adm—l K—ll's having been sent out in June, with only Twenty Sail of the Line, upon which the motions he alludes to were grounded, is well known. The questions in the debate were, "Whether there was evidence sufficient on the table to prove there was a very superior force at that time in *Brest* harbour; and, supposing there was sufficient evidence for this purpose, if the First Lord of the Admiralty was justifiable in sending out an inferior

(a) Lord S—b. Parl. Reg. vol. x. p. 15.

(b) Ibid. p. 63.

“ferior force, under such circumstances?”——As to the first question, it was much laboured, that the proof was not sufficient; (a) but, as the Ministry had refused to give any further intelligence on this head, (b) they ought to have been concluded from objecting to any deficiency of formal proof. They perceived this was too flimsy a reason for negating the motion; and therefore it was roundly contended,* “That it was proper to send Mr. K——ll out at that time, notwithstanding the inferiority of his force; that this Country must run such risks in a war with *France*; and that, if the First Lord of the Admiralty was criminal in this respect, every one of his Majesty’s Ministers were equally so; that it was either a crime in common, or no crime at all.” (c)

This was the defence the Ministry made themselves at the time; but the Author has quite deserted it, and contented himself with a mere assertion, that it was proved, by authentic documents, “There were Thirty-five Sail of the Line in November, 1777, and Forty-four in June, 1778; and that, when Adm—l K——ll went out with Twenty, there were but *Seventeen* in the harbour of *Brest*; and that therefore, as the premises, endeavoured to be established, were

“not

(a) Lord M——e, and Lord N—b. Parl. Reg. vol. xii.

p. 38, 44.

(b) Ibid. p. 1, 4.

(c) Parl. Register, vol. xii. p. 46.

* Notwithstanding the pains taken to enforce this doctrine, 170 Members remained unconvinced; among which, it is observable, there were above two-thirds of the Members of Counties present, who voted for the motion.

"not founded in fact, the conclusion must of course fall to the ground." (a)

Now, if this position is true, that there were Thirty-five Sail of the Line ready in November, 1777, and Forty-four in June following, what excuse is there for not sending out a larger force than Twenty Sail of the Line? This would have been running a risk without any occasion; for, as to the force sent to *America*, this was no more than sufficient to counteract the fleet sent there under *D'Estaing*; and consequently, if *D'Estaing's* Squadron had remained at home, there would then have been the same disparity between the naval force of *Great-Britain* and *France*: And it must be remembered, that, at the same time the First Lord of the Admiralty declared we had Thirty-five Sail of the Line ready, he declared "we were in such a state of preparation, as, when further appearances should justify us, to keep pace with our neighbours." (b)

The next assertion, that when Mr. K——ll sailed with Twenty Sail of the Line, there were but *Seventeen* Ships in *Brest*, is founded on a gross mistake, and taken from an error of the press in the authority to which he alludes: (c) for the lowest calculation of the ships ready in *Brest* was *Twenty-seven*, though there was reason to believe there were five more; and the whole scope of the debate, as well as the context of the speech alluded to, proves that the lowest number of ships in *Brest* harbour were *Twenty-seven*, instead of *Seventeen*; which shows the extreme inaccuracy of the Author, if not worse.

(a) Short Hist. p. 22.

(b) Lord S——b. Parl. Reg. vol. x. p. 63.

(c) Lord M——r. Ibid. vol. xii. p. 39.

Such are the facts, and the reasoning, upon which he grounds the abuse of *the Party*, as he calls them, for their conduct on this occasion.—Now this Party, which he sometimes calls *Opposition*, and sometimes *Faction*, consisted of a Hundred and Seventy Gentlemen, and among them Two Thirds of all the Members of Counties that were present, who, whatever their other merits may be, certainly have not the merit of enjoying lucrative employments under Government; and the Public must judge, whether the disinterestedness in this scale does not preponderate the small difference there was in the numbers on this occasion.

It required a more than ordinary degree of courage in this Author, to attribute the steps taken in favour of *Ireland*, to the factious spirit of Opposition; when it is well known, that this matter was first stirred in the preceding Session by Two Noble Lords, (a) as zealous as any in favour of Ministry, but who, I doubt not, acted from the most honourable motives: That, when the matter was again considered early this Session, it was both supported and opposed by persons of different descriptions: (b) That, though it was carried against any further relaxation to *Ireland*, (c) yet the necessity of some further indulgence was apparent to all parties before the Session closed; and the only reason given by the Ministry for doing nothing then was, that the Session was too far advanced to give the matter that consideration which the importance of the subject required; a reason

(a) Lord N—b, and Lord B—p. Parl. Register, vol. ix. p. 118, 119.

(b) Ibid. vol. xii. p. 108, 109.

(c) Ibid. p. 178.

a reason that certainly did not apply when it was before moved: but the Ministry promised they would lay the proper information before the House early the next Session.

The Author has been extremely short in his account (a) of the origin of the *American Enquiry*, though he is very prolix in drawing conclusions from the evidence that was brought on one side of the question. The Enquiry itself was owing to the following circumstances: Sir W—— H—e, finding his requisitions not complied with, and concluding from thence he had lost the confidence of the Ministry, desired leave to come home; and, on his arrival, found his conduct was very severely censured in those periodical and other publications, which are known to be under the influence and direction of Government. It is true, the Ministry (b) were at first silent themselves; but they did not disavow these charges: they contented themselves with declaring they had never dropped any expressions prejudicial to Sir W—— H—e's character; but they did not declare such charges were ill founded: on the other hand, some of these charges were avowed by Gentlemen at this time in the confidence of Government. (c) It is no wonder therefore, that men of such spirit as Sir W—— H—e, and his Brother, and who had hitherto stood so high in the opinion of their Country, should wish an enquiry into their conduct, that they might have an opportunity of disproving what was roundly asserted in all the Ministerial Publications, viz. "That our want of decisive success in *America* was
owing

(a) *Short History*, p. 31.

(b) Lord G. G——e. *Parl. Register*, vol. xi. p. 112.

(c) Lord Ad——e of S——d, and Governor J——e.

“owing solely to the misconduct of the General.” The necessity of this enquiry, therefore, was urged by the General, (a) in the middle of December last, and acceded to, the same day, by the Noble Lord at the head of the *American* Department; (b) and accordingly the motion for the papers relating to the war in *America* was carried without any division. (c)

The papers being thus laid before the House, for the perusal of the Members, (d) the General, toward the latter end of April, entered upon his Defence, which was one of the most perspicuous narratives ever delivered on such an occasion, and confirmed every one, who had read the papers, in the high opinion entertained of his conduct. Even the Minister himself declared, “That this account was an ample answer to any whispers, or libels, that had been circulated against the Honourable Gentleman’s character; that he was free to say, he was perfectly satisfied; and made no scruple to declare, he had done his duty in every particular.” (e) And another Noble Lord, high in the confidence of Administration, said, “There was scarcely a letter on the table, which did not contain some fresh proof what confidence his Majesty reposed in their zeal, their integrity, and great military talents: the best-founded eulogiums, he said, had been made upon them from every quarter.” (f) But, as there were some facts in this relation, to which

(a) Sir W—H—e. Parl. Register, vol. xi. p. 159.

(b) Lord G—G—e. Ibid. p. 160.

(c) Ibid. p. 242, 247.

(d) Ibid. p. 253

(e) Lord N—b. Ibid. vol. xii. p. 358.

(f) Ibid. p. 355.

which the papers on the table did not apply, Sir *W—* *H—e* had before moved for the attendance of Lord *Cornwallis*, and several other Officers of rank and note, to confirm the account he had given of his conduct. Now, notwithstanding the necessity of this, if any enquiry was proper at all, the Author has not said a word of the successful opposition made to it by the Ministry, though it was carried by a very small majority (*a*) in a pretty full House; but the absurdity and inconsistency of this was afterwards pointed out by a Gentleman of their own body, who must be confessed to have acted a manly part on this occasion: (*b*) and thus the Ministry, fearing to run the risque of a division, were obliged to desist from their opposition. (*c*)

It must be this transaction, to which the Author alludes, or would wish to confound, when he says, "An Enquiry was at length extorted by
" patriotic declamation, when it had been once
" refused by a vote." (*d*) But the enquiry, as has been before stated, was agreed to with an affected indifference, 'till it was apprehended that something might come out in the course of it, which would not only exculpate the General, but criminate the Ministry: And indeed, as the latter had staked their credit the three last campaigns on the most decisive success, and the adequacy of the force for that purpose, it was very evident, that, if the General was not to blame, they were so, either in having deceived the House, or
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(*a*) Parl. Register, vol. xii. p. 372, and 188.

(*b*) Mr. *R—y*. Ibid. p. 395 to 397.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 398.

(*d*) Short History, p. 31.

themselves. This was the natural inference from their former declarations; and this was seen so clearly by the Noble Lord at the head of the *American* Department, that, notwithstanding he had been quite silent hitherto in his own person, yet he now fairly joined issue with the General, and declared, "That, if the General, in the tide of success, had followed his advantages up, by crossing the *Delaware*, and had possessed himself of the Province of *Pennsylvania*, he thought now, and then, we had a fair prospect of terminating the war that campaign;" (a) and "that, after marching up to *Washington's* entrenchments, and abandoning every measure for compelling him to leave that strong position, a month was lost by that unsuccessful attempt, and returning to *New York*:" And again, "that the next step taken by the General, was to proceed to sea, where he continued another month; and, instead of going up the *Delaware*, and landing at *Wilmington*, or *Newcastle*, in the *Delaware*, another month was lost." (a)

Was not this a direct attack upon the General's conduct of the war? and, if the Noble Lord was of this opinion, why was he so long silent? and why did not he call a Court-Martial, or at least a Court of Enquiry, into the General's conduct, on his first coming over? This certainly confirmed the opinion, that had been long entertained, of the quarter from whence the former attacks proceeded.

Notwithstanding this declaration, the Noble Lord said, "He saw no good reasons for proceeding in the Enquiry: he approved of every other
" part

(a) Lord G. G——e. Parl. Reg. vol. xii. p. 392.

“ part of the General’s conduct.” (a) But the House was of a different opinion; for it was said, even by some of the Minister’s best Friends, “ That when the Noble Lord, the *American Secretary*, had risen in his place, and made a “ specific and direct accusation—that after such “ a charge, so made in such an Assembly, in the “ face of the Nation, it would indeed be cruelty, “ and the last species of injustice, not to hear “ the Honourable General in his defence:” (b)

And the motion was carried without a division. Accordingly Lord *Cornwallis*, Major-General *Grey*, and four other Gentlemen of weight and consequence, were examined, not only by Sir *W—* and Lord *H—e*, but by several other Gentlemen on both sides the House: But the Author says, “ The result of the Enquiry was “ very different from what Opposition hoped.” (c)

It is observable, that Sir *W. H—e*’s examination related only to the defence of his own conduct, in those particulars in which he had been attacked either within doors or without. All the Witnesses concurred in giving the most ample testimony to his conduct; that he had served his Country with fidelity, assiduity, and great ability: But they did not content themselves with a general opinion, but spoke to the particular points in which the General had been censured, in a manner that wiped away every aspersion that had been cast, either directly or indirectly, upon his conduct. (d) This could be easily proved, if it came within my design; and, for the

(a) Lord *G. G—e*. Parl. Reg. vol. xii. p. 394.

(b) Mr. *R—y*. Ibid. p. 397.

(c) Short Hist. p. 31.

(d) The Evidence. Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 253 to 471.

the truth of this, I appeal, for the present, to the Evidence itself.

But, in the course of the examination, other matters than the conduct of the General were enquired into by other Members: The Witnesses, being persons of weight and consequence in other respects than their military profession, were asked questions concerning the nature of the war, and the disposition of the inhabitants: The evidence given on this head was not very satisfactory to the persons who managed the war at home, and militated not a little with the reasons given for having persisted in it so long: it was professedly to controvert this evidence, that other Witnesses were called, than those moved for by Sir *W. H—e.* (a)

The evidence given on this head by General *Robertson*, and *J. Galloway*, Esq; certainly contradicted the evidence before given on this subject by the other Witnesses; but this had nothing to do with the principal object of the enquiry, which was the conduct of the Commander. As to the amount of their evidence, upon the other part of the business, namely, the disposition of the *Americans*, much allowance must be made for the situation and circumstances of the last Gentleman, who was in fact a party concerned, and too much interested to be an impartial judge upon the subject; Besides, if any part of the evidence given by the last Gentlemen, at all affected the General, he had no opportunity of calling further Witnesses, in contradiction to this new matter: on the contrary, the very last day but two of the Session, both the General, and his Noble

(a) Lord G. G——. Parl. R. g. vol. xiii. p. 69, 271.

Noble Brother, desired, "that Ministry would
 " declare if they had any thing to lay to either
 " of their charge, or had collected any crimi-
 " nality from the evidence that had been pro-
 " duced on either side." (a) To which neither
 of the Noble Lords made any reply in person;
 though another Lord, high in their confidence,
 said, "That no charge was ever intended, from
 " the beginning of this enquiry to the end; that
 " the General and his Brother, so far from being
 " blamed, had the approbation of their Sove-
 " reign, and of all rational Men within the House
 " and out of it, for their conduct in autho-
 " rity." (b)

Whether the conduct of the Ministry was con-
 sistent in this enquiry, it is not now my business
 to enquire: but, certainly, the inferences de-
 ducible from it were not, "that the *British* Army
 " were unskilfully and languidly led; and that
 " the injudicious and inactive management of
 " the war was the sole obstacle to the restoration
 " of peace." (c) But, whatever were the conclu-
 sions deducible from this enquiry so far as it
 went, it certainly broke up before the General
 had an opportunity of calling the whole of the
 evidence he intended.

Now, notwithstanding this, and the unani-
 mous testimony of every Officer to the skill and
 conduct of the General, anonymous Authors still
 continue to repeat their base attacks, and still
 baser insinuations; as a proof of which, I need
 only refer to the Pamphlet under consideration; to
 another, intituled, "A View of the Evidence, &c." to

(a) Sir W. and Lord H—e. Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 537, 538.

(b) Lord N—b. Ibid. p. 538.

(c) Short Hist. p. 33, 36, 37.

to "Some Letters to a Nobleman;" and to "Considerations on the *American Enquiry*:" all of which are written with the same candour, and the same regard to truth, if they do not all come from the same hand.

As to the opinions given, particularly by the last Witness, concerning the dispositions of *America* towards this Country, in order to justify the conduct of the Ministry for persevering so long in the war before they took steps towards an accommodation, and in order to prove the further practicability of reducing that Country to obedience by force of arms, I will only observe, that these are two distinct propositions: for, though it should be proved, that the actual state of that Country is such, that we should be able, in a campaign or two, to reduce it, it by no means follows, that reasonable terms of accommodation ought not to have been before offered; because it is owing to the security given on the subject of Taxation, and to those reasonable terms, that there is now so great a party in our favour: and, that these terms have been listened to by great bodies of People, is another proof that Independence, and a Separation from this Country, was not universally the object; which was at one time the only reason given by the Ministry, in both Houses of Parliament, for their perseverance in the war, and for not paying the least attention to the two successive Petitions from the Congress. On the other hand, if it should be made out, as has been attempted, (a) that "not one fifth of the People have, from principle and choice, supported the Rebellion," there was the less
excuse

(a) Mr. G——y. Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 425, 426.

excuse for not offering explicit terms of reconciliation, in order to justify the remaining four fifths to take an active part in our favour, as many seem now to have done, notwithstanding the change of circumstances.

But, in fact, it is impossible to draw any conclusions of the disposition of the *Americans* at one period, when all hopes of reconciliation were vanished, from their dispositions at another, when such hopes subsisted; or to argue that they were not *almost unanimous* in their resistance, because four-fifths of the People had not Independence in view when they took up arms, or because the declaration of Independence was carried only by a small majority in Congress; or because, at present, when reasonable terms have been offered, great bodies of the People have come in and submitted to a constitutional dependence on *Great-Britain*.

This last circumstance alone shews the advantages that might have been reaped, if pacific measures had been earlier adopted; but it is not itself of sufficient magnitude, even though supported by Mr. *Galloway's* opinion, to prove the facility with which *America* may even now be conquered, or "the usurped authority of the "New States suppressed," as it is expressed in the "Letters to a Nobleman," p. 32.

If however the time was past for a reconciliation with *America* on constitutional Dependence, and if there were no hopes of regaining it by force of arms, it was then certainly worthy consideration, whether we should keep a larger force than was necessary for the mere purpose of defending such parts of that continent as we already had, or whether we should not call the

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greatest

greatest part of our force from thence, and direct it against a more vulnerable Enemy.

Other reasons might be given for this opinion, besides those mentioned by a Gentleman in the House of Commons the first day of the last Session. It is much to be apprehended, that the fate of General *Prevost's* army will too clearly demonstrate the want of judgement in pursuing a different line of conduct.

The Reader will now judge with what view the expressions mangled, and then censured, in the beginning of his work, namely, "that war
" ought not to be offensive with regard to *Ame-*
" *rica*;" "that we ought to withdraw our forces
" from their coast; and that the courage of the
" Rebels, and the natural strength of their country,
" were insurmountable obstacles to a further per-
" severance, &c." (a)—the Reader, I say, will now see with what view those expressions were used: and, indeed, it is impossible to judge of single sentences, even if they are correctly quoted, without knowing the general scope of the argument.

But the Author says, "Unfortunately for this
" Country, Opposition were permitted, in a man-
" ner, to take the lead in *American* measures." (b) For the truth of this, I appeal to the above progressive state of the measures recommended on both sides, and believe the Reader will be more ready to cry out, "Most fortunate would it have
" been for this Country, if the Opposition had
" taken the lead in *American* measures!"

After having detected the Author in the most
flagrant

(a) Short Hist. p. 8, and 39.

(b) Short Hist. p. 41.

flagrant misrepresentations, to answer his insidious purposes, it would be idle to follow him through every malicious insinuation and artful perversion of the most known facts: for instance, when he says, “ an army was lost in *America*;—the calamity expected with so much anxiety by Opposition:—Instead of proposing those vigorous exertions, which the honour, as well as the interest of the Nation required, they recommended a tame submission to Rebels, an acknowledgment of former errors, and assurances of future amendment:”(a) Whereas, on the first mention of this unhappy defeat in the House of Commons, on the 3d of December, 1777,(b) not a word was mentioned on the subject of submission, or even reconciliation with *America*; and, before the House adjourned for the holidays, the Minister himself gave notice, he should prepare some plan of reconciliation with *America* at the meeting of Parliament after Christmas. This was on the 10th of December; notwithstanding which, nothing was done on this subject, ’till the 18th of February following; in which interval, the treaty between *America* and *France* was signed, and carried across the *Atlantic*.

The paragraphs that follow are very applicable; but I leave to the Reader, whether they apply to the conduct of Administration, or their Opponents. “ Was it probable that Insurgents, who had offered no terms during their misfortunes, would receive any during the moment of victory? or could it be expected

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“ that

(a) Short Hist. p. 42.

(b) Parl. Reg. vol. viii. p. 96.

“ that a Congress, who had declared for Independence when Thirty Thousand disciplined Soldiers were ready to land on their coast, “ would relinquish that Independence, after they “ had made a whole army prisoners of war?” (a) And yet this was the time the Ministry chose for treaty and negociation!

The event of this negociation need not be enlarged upon: That it was without effect, might not be owing to any defect in the Commission, or blame in those who were entrusted with the execution of it. It proceeded from its being entered upon too late: many favourable opportunities had been lost; and the Treaty with *France* was an obstacle not to be surmounted; notwithstanding which, the whole blame of the want of success in the Commission, is immediately transferred by this Author, from those who deferred it too long, to those who recommended pacific measures before it was too late, and before there was a necessity of giving up half what was afterwards in vain offered.

“ The Faction (he says) thus obtained that “ degradation of their own Country, which seems “ to have been uniformly a part of their plan:” (b) and then charges this Faction with having called in *France* and *Spain*, “ as their *Allies* for the support of their cause;” *because* they made use of every argument to induce the Ministry to act in such a manner as to prevent the interference of either of those Powers: And though it plainly appears, from the *Spanish* Rescript itself, that there had been a mediation on foot during the whole winter, and that it was declared by his *Spanish* Majesty

(a) Short History, p. 42.

(b) Ibid. p. 43.

Majesty at the beginning of it, that, if the mediation should be broke off without effect, he should be under the necessity of *taking his part*; yet this Author has the effrontery to insinuate, that every encouragement, and every lure, was held out to *Spain* by the Opposition, "in order
 " to induce her to throw her weight into the
 " scale of *France*; and that it was this which
 " determined her to such a step:" Whereas it appears by the Rescript itself, as was said before, that *Spain* had declared her resolution in this respect so early as September, in case the negotiation then set on foot should be fruitless. This is his reasoning, and these are his deductions; another specimen of which, and of his adherence to truth, I proceed now to state.

And this is his account of the conduct of Opposition, on the delivery of the *Spanish* Rescript, where he says, "An opportunity offered of doing
 " themselves credit; yet the Nation cannot see,
 " without indignation and astonishment, that
 " *Acts*, indispensably necessary for the safety of the
 " State, have been combated with all the viru-
 " lence and obstinacy of oratory in every stage
 " of their progress." (a) But the Author is quite silent about the manner in which these *Acts* were combated; nor has he mentioned any authority, or circumstance, to confirm this assertion: he relies solely upon his art of misrepresentation, and of confounding what is said on one occasion with what is said on another totally different.

The facts are so recent, happening late in June, that I need appeal only to the memory of the Public on this occasion. Is it not a fact, that, when the *Spanish* Rescript was delivered to the House of Commons, the 17th
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(a) Short History, p. 51.

of last June, together with a message from his Majesty, a Noble Lord, (a) whose name is almost synonymous with loyalty and patriotism, immediately expressed his wishes, that the Address to his Majesty might pass unanimously, and that no one could feel more sensibly than himself the indignity offered to the King, and to the Nation? It did pass unanimously; and his Majesty in his answer says, "That his particular thanks are due
 " for this unanimous Address; and that he enters
 " no fear of the designs or enterprises of his
 " enemies, while he stands at the head of a free,
 " brave, and *united* People." It is true, that the same Noble Lord did, after this Address was agreed to, propose another Address to his Majesty, "That he would be pleased to give immediate orders, so to collect his Fleets and Armies,
 " as to exert the whole force of this Country
 " against the House of *Bourbon*." (b)

Whatever construction can be put upon this Address; whether it was meant that our whole force in *America* should be directed against the House of *Bourbon*, or only such part of it as could be spared, consistently with retaining our present possessions there; and whether it would have been advisable, or not, to direct even such parts against the House of *Bourbon*, or to have employed it in active expedition to the South; certainly this motion did not proceed from any peculiar attachment to the House of *Bourbon*, nor can be considered as a very friendly Act towards their "New
 " Allies", as this Author calls them, with an affectation of witticism, "in the cause of Liberty."

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(a) Lord 7— C——b.

(b) Parl. Register, vol. xiii. p. 446.

Is it not a fact, that, upon the Minister's moving, three days afterwards, for a Bill to augment and double the Militia, though the Ministry seemed by no means agreed themselves (a) concerning the propriety of this measure, it yet was declared, by every Member who spoke on the side of Opposition, that they should not oppose the motion, or any motion calculated in any manner to add to the defence of the kingdom? (b) Many objections indeed were started by Gentlemen on all sides of the House; but by none more powerful ones, than those urged by Gentlemen who have always voted in support of Administration; some indeed by others, but then it was uniformly declared, "That they would vote for
 " the measure, because they would not suffer it
 " to be conceived, that, in a moment when Government had declared the kingdom to be in
 " extreme danger, they were unwilling to agree
 " to any measure proposed, with a view to call
 " forth the strength of the Country, and add to
 " its defence." (c) Accordingly the Bill passed the House of Commons, without any division in any stage of it; and, as every body knows, was thrown out, that is, the most effective part of it, by the House of Lords, not by Opposition, but by the Minister's own Friends. (d)

The next step, and the last that was taken by Administration this Session, was the Bill for taking away the protection of the laws from such persons as were not liable, on this account, to be pressed

(a) Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 507.

(b) Mr. F—x. Ibid. p. 472.—Mr. B—ke. Ibid. p. 478.
 —Mr. S—e. Ibid. p. 478.—Mr. T. T—d. Ibid. p. 525.

(c) Mr. P—s. Ibid. p. 509.

(d) Lord G—r, Lord T—d, &c.

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(*b*) Mr. F—x. Ibid. p. 472.—Mr. B—ke. Ibid. p. 478.
 —Mr. S—e. Ibid. p. 478.—Mr. T. T——d. Ibid. p. 525.

(*c*) Mr. P——s. Ibid. p. 509.

(*d*) Lord G——r, Lord T——d, &c.

pressed into the Navy. Now it is to be observed, that the question concerning Pressing, though it has some judicial opinions in favour of its legality, is a question that is not settled to the satisfaction, or at least not agreeably to the feelings, of the People. I think myself, the best argument in its support is drawn from the necessity of the case in times of danger; an argument that it is difficult to put under proper restraint.

Not that I mean now to enter into this extensive subject; but only to state it as a fact, that there are two opinions upon it: But the object of this Bill was, not only to take away the benefit of the Protections, to which those who enjoyed them trusted for their personal security, but to have a reference to a time past, and consequently to render legal any violences that had been committed on their persons.

Now any laws, that have a retrospect, especially where they affect persons of a particular description only, are founded in injustice, and are a breach of public faith: But the argument (a) in favour of it in this instance, was a powerful one, namely, the extreme magnitude of the danger to which we were exposed. I can only lament and deplore the fatal counsels of those, which have brought us, step by step, to such a situation, as to make an Act, that calls in question the justice of the Legislature, "indispensably necessary," as this Author confesses, "for the safety of the State."

The Bill was moved for, late at night, at the end of a long and interesting debate, and in a very thin House; and the Mover (b) declared his reason
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(a) Parl. Register, vol. xiii. p. 115 to 118.

(b) Mr. W———, Attorney-General.

for preferring this late hour was, "That no notice of any such measure should get out; for that, if it were publicly known, the object of the Bill would be in great measure defeated:" (a) So that the confidence the objects of this Bill placed in the protection of the laws, was the very snare by which they were to be entrapped; but, notwithstanding the objections to the other parts of this measure, the time of announcing it to the House, and the avowed reasons for announcing it at that hour, were the only grounds of the opposition that was made to it. (b) This struck the feelings of two or three of the few Independent (c) Members who were present; and they could not refrain from expressing those feelings with some warmth; for which, if any was wanting, the suddenness of the occasion was surely a sufficient apology: the Bill, however, was read the first and second time, and committed in less than an hour for the next day; that is, in fact, for the same day; for it was morning before it was presented. (d) When the Committee sat, some amendments were proposed with regard to the Coal Trade, which, though negatived here by the Ministry, were afterwards adopted in the other House; (e) but there was not the least further opposition to the principle of the Bill in any stage of it.

In the other House, indeed, the objection of its being an *ex-post-facto* law was strongly urged; but, to shew this did not proceed from a spirit

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(a) Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 517.

(b) Ibid. p. 518.

(c) S——r-G——l S——e, and Sir J. J. C——e. Ibid. p. 518, 521.

(d) Ibid. p. 524.

(e) Ibid. p. 527, 537.

of opposition, it was offered, on the *part* of Opposition, (a) that, if the Minister would consent to let the Bill pass without such a breach of public faith upon the face of it, they would immediately agree to a Bill of Indemnity for what was passed, and accede unanimously to the present Bill; and it was agreed on all hands, that not a single man should be given up 'till every ship had its full complement. It is plain therefore, that the opposition was to the manner of legalizing this measure, and not to the measure itself, however violent it was in its own nature: And it is plain also, that, if unanimity, in the strict sense of the word, was an object of such consequence, it might have been obtained, by acceding to the above candid proposition.

I will now only ask, whether the Author's assertions are well founded, namely, that "the
 " Party clogged every measure for arming the
 " kingdom by sea and land; and that they com-
 " bated Acts indispensably necessary for the
 " safety of the State, with all the virulence and
 " obstinacy of oratory, in every stage of their
 " progress"? (b)

But it is said, "The Faction announced, with
 " a species of savage triumph, that the City of
 " London would not vote a man, or a shilling,
 " for the national defence in the present emer-
 " gency." (b) It is true, a Member (c) of the
 City did, in answer to some ridicule and abuse
 thrown upon his Constituents, declare, "They
 " were as loyal to their King, and as zealous to
 " serve.

(a) Speeches of the D— of R——d, and Lord B——l,
 29th of June.

(b) Short Hist. p. 51.

(c) Mr. S——c.

“ serve their Country, as ever they had been in
 “ moments of national emergency ; and that they
 “ would lay down their lives to repel and punish
 “ the hostile attacks of the House of *Bourbon* ;
 “ but that this would be done, upon condition
 “ that the Noble Lord, and his Colleagues, were
 “ dismissed from their employments, and the
 “ conduct of the war entrusted to abler hands.”(a)
 But this is not taken the least notice of by this
 Author ; he describes their resolution as absolute
 and peremptory, without giving the reasons,
 whether justifiable or not, upon which they acted.

Now, though I agreed with the City of *Lon-*
don in their premises, namely, that the Ministry
 are to blame in having so conducted the affairs
 of *Great-Britain*, as to have been the cause of
 our present misfortunes, I could not agree in
 their conclusion, namely, not to unite against
 the common Enemy by every voluntary and ex-
 traordinary assistance, as well as by such as is
 usual and common with the rest of the People.
 I cannot help thinking but the resentment of
 the City, against those whom they think the cause
 of our misfortunes, has got the better of their
 judgement on this occasion ; nor do I conceive,
 that the most spirited exertions against the
 common Enemy do at all shew an approba-
 tion of the Ministry for their past conduct, or
 are inconsistent with the most settled aversion to
 their persons, or opposition to their administration.

But however this is, and whether the City
 may have been misled or not by their resentment
 in this instance, they certainly have not been
 guided in this respect by the Opposition in both
 Houses of Parliament, and to which only the

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(a) Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 479.

ter n *Opposition* can properly belong; for we have seen, that, instead of tying up the hands of their Country in this hour of danger, they have with-held the fairest objections that might be made to two Acts, that nothing but the greatest mismanagement in our counsels could have rendered necessary.

But if the Author expects a greater degree of unanimity than this; if he expects there is to be such an unanimity as supposes an union with, and reliance upon, the present Ministry, and as precludes every species of opposition to Men, under whose administration misfortunes have continually increased; if he means such an unanimity as is to preclude all freedom of debate with regard to future measures, or freedom of enquiry with regard to past; then will all his artifice and sophistry have been in vain: for, at the very time when the Members of Opposition declared, individually, they should not oppose either of the measures above stated, the idea of an union and alliance of this kind was at the same time reprobated in the strongest terms that language is capable of; and, among other things, it was said, “that they were unwilling to trust the
“ last stake of the kingdom to those who had
“ reduced it to its last stake.”(a)

And again,—“What! enter into an alliance
“ with those very Ministers who had betrayed
“ their Country, who had prostituted the public
“ strength, who had prostituted the public
“ wealth, and who had prostituted, what was
“ still more valuable, the glory of the Nation!
“ The idea was too monstrous to be admitted for
“ a

(a) Lord J-n C.—b. Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 478.

“ a moment. Gentlemen must have foregone
 “ their principles, and given up their honour, be-
 “ fore they could approach the threshold of an
 “ alliance so abominable, so scandalous, and so
 “ disgraceful. Did the Noble Lord think it
 “ possible, he could ally himself with those Mi-
 “ nisters who had led us on from one degree of
 “ wretchedness to another, ’till they had brought
 “ us at length to the extreme moment of peril,
 “ to the last verge of destruction! Ally himself,
 “ &c. &c. He begged therefore, for himself
 “ and his friends, to disclaim any such alliance;
 “ and he declared, he was the rather inclined to
 “ disavow such a connection, because, from the
 “ past conduct of Ministers, he was warranted
 “ to declare, and to maintain, that such an al-
 “ liance would be something worse than an al-
 “ liance with *France* and *Spain*; it would be an
 “ alliance with those who pretended to be the
 “ friends of *Great-Britain*, but who were, in fact
 “ and in truth, her worst enemies.”(a)

I should not have quoted this speech so much
 at length, if it was not for the latter part of it,
 to which, I suppose, our Author alludes in the
 following paragraph:—“ In short, they presumed
 “ to assert in public, that the tyranny of *France*
 “ and *Spain* would be more welcome to them,
 “ than the continuance of their Rivals in
 “ power.”(b) And I shall leave the Reader to
 judge, with how much ingenuity the sense is
 misrepresented, and with how much truth the
 above unqualified sentiment is imputed to them.

The next page of our Author being only mat-
 ter of fair conjecture, I shall take little notice of
 it :

(a) Mr. F—x. Parl. Reg. vol. xiii. p. 492, 493.

(b) Short Hist. p. 51.

it: It is that, "in case of an invasion of this
 " Island, there is every reason to fear, that Op-
 " position will be still an Opposition." (a)—This is
 candid, and shews the earnest desire he has to pro-
 mote that unanimity, which, in his last page, he
 so much recommends.

To this candid conjecture I will only oppose
 the actual exertions made by *persons of this
 description throughout the kingdom, and their
 conduct in Parliament during the last fortnight
 of the Session, when the fears of Administration
 were at the highest; to which I will only add
 the sentiments his Majesty expressed at the close
 of it, viz. "I consider it as a happy omen of
 " the success of my arms, that the increase of
 " difficulties serves only to augment the courage
 " and constancy of the Nation, and to animate
 " and *unite* my People in defence of their Country,
 " and of every thing that is dear to them." (b)

I shall now only make an observation on the
 evident design of the Author in this Short History,
 which is, plainly, to keep alive party disputes at a
 time that is more proper for action than debate;
 to decry the characters of some of the most up-
 right and virtuous Men in this nation, and, by
 depreciating their merit, to enhance that of his
 own Friends and Patrons. Conscious that the
 conduct of these last will not stand the test of
 examination, he sees that nothing can keep them
 much longer in their station, unless he can esta-
 blish an opinion to the discredit of those who
 have opposed them.—How successfully he has
 done this, the Public will now judge; and they
 will

(a) Short Hist. p. 52,

(b) His Majesty's Speech, the 3d of July, 1779.

* The Dukes of Devonshire, Grafton, Richmond, and Rut-
 land; Sir George Saville, Sir Cecil Wray, &c. &c.

will judge too of the injustice of the scandalous aspersions uttered with unremitting assiduity in those daily prints, and other publications, which are known to be under the immediate influence and direction of the Ministry.—The design of this Short Defence, on the other hand, is not to give a History (I fear it could not be a short one) of the present Administration, any further than it has necessarily arisen out of this Defence; but solely to answer the illiberal charges of this Author, and to lay the facts fairly before the Reader, free from false wit and false reasoning.

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE this Work was written, and whilst it was preparing for the Press, the combined Fleets of the House of *Bourbon* have twice rode triumphant in the *British* Channel! What a fall from that pinnacle of glory to which we were raised at the close of the last war! and after having passed three fourths of the short period that has elapsed since that æra, in the most profound peace, and the most splendid prosperity.

But let not our spirits be depressed—let us make the best of our melancholy situation—Notwithstanding the superiority of numbers, this may be compensated by the superior excellence of our ships, the superior skill of our Commanders, and the superior courage and ardour of *Englishmen*, fighting for every thing that is dear to them. Let the event be what it will, to be exposed to such a danger, is itself a sufficient proof of the want of wisdom in our Councils, which,

which, from one degradation to another, have at length brought us to this most dangerous situation, from which, however, I still trust the united exertions of *Great-Britain* will rescue us: But this is not enough; a mere removal of present and imminent danger is not all that we expect at the hands of the Minister.

When, however, the designs of our natural Enemies are defeated by the united exertions of our Countrymen, it will be then a proper season to enquire into the causes of the dangers to which we have been exposed, and the losses we have sustained. In the mean time, I think I can venture to answer, that the Opposition will remain firm to the real interest of their Country; that they will not suffer the unjust calumnies of their Enemies to divert their attention from the public good; that they will, for a time, suspend their indignation against the Authors of the public calamities; that though they foretold, and would have prevented, the ruinous consequences of the *American* war, they will now do all in their power to avert and lessen them; that, as they were not able to preserve, they will exert every effort to restore the prosperity and tranquillity of their Country; but, at the same time, that they will not forget, at a proper season, in a legal and parliamentary way, to call the Authors of these misfortunes to account, and to prevent the further ill consequences of their continuing to direct the affairs of this once powerful and happy Nation.

T H E E N D.

